







KASPERLE'S ADVENTURES



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"Why that is a real Kasperle!"

Kasper's ★ Adventures

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★
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KASPERLE'S ADVENTURES

CHAPTER I

In Master Friedolin's House

About a hundred years ago, there stood, in the midst of a forest, an old house. Just how old it was, no one knew; the people in the region said it might have stood there for several hundred years. Formerly the forest surrounding it had extended so far that it would have been easy to get lost in it. But gradually the villages grew closer, and on the edges a great many trees had been cleared

away, so that finally there were three roads leading out from the ancient little house into the country.

At the end of each road, there was a village; to the east, Schönauf; to the south, Lindendorf; and to the west there was one which the people called Protzendorf. Only very rich farmers lived in Protzendorf and they were so haughty that they did not associate with the inhabitants of the other villages at all and the children from there never came to visit the little forest house. This the children from the other villages loved to do, for there lived in the forest cottage a wood carver who carved all sorts of wonderful and funny things. "Kasperle carver," he was called in the region; he carved diligently the whole livelong day nothing but Kasperle dolls, and his little wife, Annette, dressed them. Many a time a gorgeous array of dolls was displayed on the wooden bench in the little forest cottage, and the children from Schönauf and Lindendorf would often come to feast their eyes upon them. They always managed to find out when a number of dolls were ready to be shipped out into the wide world. For then Liebetraut, the adopted daughter of the Kasperle carver, ran hurriedly into one of the villages and told the children, for she was a good friend of them all. Indeed, many a time Liebetraut hung a red curtain up in front of one of the windows of the cottage and presented a little play for the children, till the whole forest house was surrounded with their peals of joyous laughter. It was always hard for the children to part with the dolls, but in spite of this they were packed into a large box and shipped out into

the wide world and none ever returned to the forest cottage again.

In Lindendorf and Schönau the people were not aware of the fact that the Kasperle carver was really a famous man. But in the markets and fairs all over Germany, and far beyond, his name was known; and everyone who had a puppet theater considered himself fortunate if he owned a doll which had been carved by Master Friedolin. It was agreed, far and wide, that no more comical or more jovial dolls were to be found. And when they were dressed they were—well, simply indescribable! Frau Annette and Liebetraut were very clever in thinking up something new for jackets and hats; quite stunningly did they dress the dolls.

Life moved on peacefully and happily in the little forest house. Wealth there was not, but neither did the occupants have to go hungry. Master Friedolin himself was a quiet man; he sat at his carving from early morn till late at night but he was always glad whenever his wife laughed or Liebetraut sang. From outside they could hear the rustling of the leaves and the songs of the birds so that Frau Annette often used to say: "Nowhere can it be so pleasant as it is here."

Liebetraut with her golden locks was like a sunbeam. Whence she came no one knew. One beautiful autumn day a traveling apprentice brought a small bundle into the forest cottage and said: "Here, madam, I found this out on the road." From the little bundle two large blue eyes beamed at Frau Annette and she exclaimed immediately: "Oh, what a dear darling little child!

I should like to keep it!" And so she did. No one knew to whom the child belonged and no one knew its parents. The pastor in Schöнау baptized the little one as Liebetaut, and Master Friedolin and his wife Annette became her parents. That was a long time ago, however; in the meantime Liebetaut had grown to be a tall beautiful girl in whom her foster parents took great pride.

Liebetaut, too, was of the opinion that the forest cottage was the nicest place in the whole world. She was very fond of the Kasperle dolls and often used to remark: "What a pity they are not alive!" And when she remarked this on one occasion—it was on a regular winter's day, the snow was coming down in huge flakes, all the paths were snowed under, and the storm was raging about the forest cottage—Friedolin, who was usually so quiet said suddenly: "My great-great-great-grandfather did possess a real live Kasper."

At this Liebetaut had to laugh heartily. But the master assured her in all seriousness: "No, no, child, that is not to be laughed at, that is true. You know, of course, that my great-great-great-grandfather was a wood carver and lived in this very same house. To be sure he did not carve Kasperle figures, but only saintly statues and fine ornamental pieces of furniture."

"Like the clock," interposed Liebetaut. She glanced up at the old clock which was garlanded with ornamental carving. On it there were trees and flowers and all sorts of beasts of the forest.

Master Friedolin nodded. "Yes, to be sure," he said, "my

grandfather carved that clock and, besides that, all sorts of things for churches and castles. He was highly esteemed and his carving had a wide reputation. Occasionally he went out over the country, working here and there for weeks at a time. He always used to say that it must be fine indeed to live in a castle, but, as for him, he still preferred his modest little forest house.

"Once he was hurrying home, for he was very homesick. The forest that surrounded our little house was much larger then than now. At night it was haunted, and seldom did anyone venture to go through the woods in the dark. But my forefather thought: Oh, pshaw!. My house is in the middle of the woods. I'll reach that safely at least.

"It was a perfectly clear moonlight night. The tops of the tall trees were flooded with a silvery light and the forest clearings were lighted in the same way. In this soft moonlight my forefather suddenly heard a peculiar noise as if someone were laughing. He stood still, looked all around, and presently he noticed a clearing where a most ingenious little sprite kept turning somersaults. He went up to him hurriedly and snip-snap, in a twinkling he had the little fellow by the seat of the pants. It was, to be sure, a simple-minded lad he had laid hold of. He was about the size of a seven- or eight-year-old boy. The little fellow had a large hooked nose and a gigantic mouth. On his head he wore a fiery red cap adorned with golden bells, and besides that a very gay suit, as shabby, however, as if he had had it on his back for fifty years at least.

“ ‘Pray tell, who are you?’ my forefather asked.

“The little lad made the funniest face imaginable and showed no inclination to reply. But inasmuch as my forefather held him with a very firm grip he finally did give him some information. He was a real genuine live Kasperle, he said. Way up north he had lived with a famous magician, who owned a very old house in an ancient city. The magician had always kept him tightly locked up and often amused himself with him. But the lonely life in the old house had become very monotonous to Kasperle, and one fine day, when the magician had neglected to lock everything up tight, he escaped. He had spent many years roaming about in the world. For a long period he had been court jester to a prince, then he had spent some time frequenting markets and fairs.

“To find a genuine Kasperle, my forefather reflected to himself, is a fine thing; home I’ll take him. And he led the little chap, who followed willingly, home to the forest house. Well, there Kasperle lived for many years. My forefather began to carve puppet dolls with faces like Kasperle’s, and inasmuch as Kasperle could make the most extraordinary faces, the dolls were a great success. It was not long before many people wanted Kasperle dolls; and when my forefather finally died and his son succeeded to his place, the latter gave up all other kinds of carving and made only Kasperle dolls. And thus it continued, the son always learning the art from his father; and if I myself had a son he should become a Kasperle carver likewise.”

Master Friedolin stopped talking and Liebetraut, very much excited, exclaimed: "But Kasperle, father, what became of Kasperle?"



The master reflected as he whittled at one of the dolls. "Ah, if I only knew that," he muttered. "My late grandfather knew, but he died very suddenly one day, and my father was then only a little lad; so he never learned the secret. My grandfather is said to have told a friend, but who he was and where he hailed from,

no one knew. At any rate, I never saw Kasperle, nor did my late father."

"Oh, what a shame!" exclaimed Liebetraut. "How much fun it would be if only we had a real Kasperle here!"

The master smiled. "I readily believe, you little madcap," he said, "that a Kasperle would please you, for then you both would cut up capers here in the house, the whole livelong day!"

"Oh, here he comes again!" said Frau Annette, suddenly interrupting the conversation. Thereupon she looked out of the window in disgust; the guest who was arriving did not seem to please her at all. From a sleigh which stopped before the door, a thickset man in a fur coat alighted; he shook off some of the snow out of doors and then entered the house. He opened the living-room door and called out a loud and very friendly "good-day."

His greeting was answered very coldly; Liebetraut scampered away, and Frau Annette, who was ordinarily so friendly, said nothing at all. This didn't seem to annoy Herr Pumpel who was a trader and a peddler. He seated himself on a chair and began to tell in his loud clanging voice all sorts of things, this and that about his trips, about his deals, and what he bought and sold. And thereupon, Frau Annette burst out loudly and sternly: "But just the same, Herr Pumpel, you won't get our old chests. Not a thing in our house is going to be touched or moved, as long as my husband and I live."

"Na, na, na!" muttered Herr Pumpel, rolling his eyes like one who had just recovered from a fit of anger.

"What do you say, Friedolin?" cried Frau Annette, "Herr Pumpel won't get our chests, will he?"

"Of course not." The master shook his head thoughtfully. "I said no once, and I'll stick to it."

Then Herr Pumpel knew that he had again come on a fool's errand, and after a few moments he took leave and drove away muttering and out of sorts.

Scarcely had he left the room before Liebetraut stuck her head in at the door and asked cheerfully: "Has he gone? Did he want the old chests again?"

Frau Annette answered in the affirmative, and then the three residents of the forest cottage fell to discussing Herr Pumpel and why in the world *he* should be wanting to buy their old worm-eaten chests. His father before him had wanted them, but at that time Master Friedolin's father had said no, and now Master Friedolin said no, too.

The chests under discussion stood in the upper story of the cottage. They were very ancient and displayed some carving, but were of no special beauty. They had always stood in their places, and there they would continue to stand, let Herr Pumpel come after them as often as he pleased.

"Thank Heaven, he's gone again!" exclaimed Liebetraut. She pulled her little chair up close to Master Friedolin's, took up a bright yellow doll's skirt to sew on, and begged, "Please, Father

Friedolin, tell some more about your ancestor, who found the Kasperle."

And Master Friedolin related as he carved; Frau Annette and Liebetraut sewed, and all three again agreed that nowhere in the whole world could it possibly be pleasanter than in their venerable little cottage in the forest.



CHAPTER II

The Old Chest

Herr Pumpel drove away in bitter anger. He was terribly cross because he could not have the old chests. He mumbled and scolded so much about it that the coachman asked himself what in the world his passenger could be wanting with the old chests. He is always driving after them till I'm beginning to think there's something mysterious about it. Perhaps there's a hidden treasure in them, for otherwise no sane person would drive into the forest in such cold weather.

It was really very, very cold and stayed cold for many more days. But soon the March wind came and powerfully it blew, till the snow melted and trickled away—hurrah, it was gone! Around the forest cottage there was a mighty whistling and swishing during

these days, but in spite of the weather Liebetraut would keep running to the door and sticking out her little nose; then she would shout jubilantly: "It smells like spring; it will surely be here soon." And then one day she splashed around in the damp forest and when she returned she brought Mother Annette a bouquet of the first snowdrops.

That was an occasion for great rejoicing in the forest cottage! It turned into a regular miniature celebration, for the cottage always rejoiced with the advent of spring. And this year spring did not have to be coaxed, as had so often been the case. It came on very quickly and soon Frau Annette could say: "Now we needn't heat any more, the spring breeze will do the warming." Then all the windows were opened wide, and through a slit between two large pine trees the beloved sun peeped directly into the forest cottage. It was glorious! Liebetraut ran and gathered spring flowers every day. She filled all of the vases in the house with gay bouquets, and when the children from Schönaue and Lindendorf came trotting along, they liked it even better in the forest cottage than before. They thought it was simply adorable, and they would have loved to stay there.

On one of these beautiful spring days, Master Friedolin sat at his work-bench more industrious than ever. Within the next few days a box of Kasperle dolls was to be sent out into the wide world and he still had to finish carving several figures. When he was right in the midst of his work, the point of his knife broke off. That was really annoying. Although Frau Annette was just talking about

spring, he grumbled for quite a while till he finally got up to get a new knife from the supply chest. He ascended the old staircase which groaned and creaked beneath each step just as if it wanted to relate something about bygone days. Above, in the dusky hall of the upper story, stood a couple of old chests. They were the ones which Herr Pumpel wanted so badly. In these chests, since time immemorial, everything was kept which Friedolin needed for his Kasperle carving.

On this bright day the sun flitted through the little hall window, and both chests were aglow with its beams. This just suited Master Friedolin. He opened first one chest and, inasmuch as he did not find what he was hunting for, he opened the other. Because it was so light, he rummaged around a little to see if this and that was still there, and in so doing he suddenly noticed that there was a crack in one side of the chest. Oh ho, he thought, the chest is getting old and will probably fall to pieces! He pushed, then pulled the crack slightly, and suddenly a little door opened and to his great surprise, Master Friedolin beheld a figure standing in a small compartment; it was perhaps as large as a seven- or eight-year-old boy. This he had never seen before! The master shook his head, bewildered. Where did this thing come from all of a sudden? Finally he grabbed at it and pulled the doll out of the compartment. As he laid hold of it, it seemed to him as if the body moved. He stood it quickly on the floor and gazed at it. "Well, I declare!" he exclaimed. "Why, that is really a Kasperle!"

Hardly had he said this, before the little fellow began to shake

himself and to move; he nodded his head, raised his arms, and a dense cloud of dust came out of him.

"Kerchoo—kerchoo—kerchoo!" The master sneezed, the curious little lad sneezed, and Frau Annette who heard it from below, called out, "Friedolin, you're catching cold, aren't you?"

The voice from below seemed to make the little man, who had emerged from the chest, very happy. At once he began to laugh and zip-bang down the stairs he went. Master Friedolin stared after him, completely dumfounded. He was at a loss to explain. He had to sneeze again and again and he sneezed and sneezed. Meantime the curious little creature thundered into the living room.

Frau Annette screamed with fright and Liebetraut, who was just coming into the room with a bouquet of flowers, let them drop in terror. "O, my goodness," cried Frau Annette, "What kind of a hobgoblin is that?"

The little fellow stood standing in the middle of the room. He looked all around, shook his head and again a cloud of dust arose. "Kerchoo, kerchoo!" he sneezed, Frau Annette sneezed, Liebetraut sneezed and Master Friedolin came into the room sneezing too. "Hello, there the creature is!" he exclaimed and seized the freakish little fellow. "Jeminy, he looks almost like a Kasperle!"

"Why, I *am* Kasperle!" said the little chap sadly. "Where is Madam Erdmute and Master Ephraim?"

"What in the world are you jabbering about?" Master Friedolin suddenly tapped his forehead with his fingers. "They were my great-grandparents. Holy smoke, I do believe this is the lost

Kasperle!" He shook the little fellow, only to make the dust fly some more. "Do try to recall: how did you get into the chest? And what have you been doing in there?"

"Why, I've been sleeping!" The little lad yawned out loud. And suddenly a terrible rumbling began to take place inside him. "Oh, oh, oh," he wailed, "I'm so hungry, oh, so terribly hungry."

"For heaven's sake," cried Frau Annette, "he will die of hunger! Who knows how long he's been without food!"

"Perhaps a hundred years," muttered Master Friedolin. "No, no, it's not possible he's been in the chest that long!"

"I'm hungry, oh, oh, I am so terribly hungry!" screamed the little guest, and then Mother Annette and Liebetraut ran into the kitchen terrified and brought out everything they had. Bread, sausage, butter, milk and the curious little chap stuffed everything into his huge mouth. He gulped and gulped, became visibly fatter, till finally he puffed out both cheeks and cried contentedly: "I can't eat any more!"

"Well, that's lucky!" said Master Friedolin. "Such an appetite I never saw before. But do tell me just once, you——"

"Kasperle is my name!" shouted the little lad.

"Very well then, you Kasperle, how did you get into the chest?"

Kasperle opened his eyes wide, his mouth also, then he sighed, shook himself again and muttered: "I don't know."

"But do try to recall," commanded the master, "you must know!"

Kasperle looked about the room, strange and awe-stricken, but suddenly he spied the large old grandfather's clock and exclaimed: "That, the master made."

The inhabitants of the cottage were beginning to feel a little creepy. Was the comical stranger really the Kasperle who had once lived with their great-grandparents? Had he really slept so many, many years?

"Do try to recall!" said Master Friedolin.

"I don't know." Kasperle tried again, but freshening his memory seemed to cause him serious effort. His roguish face grew quite sad in the attempt. "I don't know," he kept on wailing. And again he shook himself violently and in so doing a large note, yellow with age, fell out of his coat pocket.

Liebetraut picked it up quickly. She looked at it and exclaimed, "There's something written on it about Kasperle, here, Father, look!"

Master Friedolin took the note, put on his spectacles thoughtfully, and read:

"Whoever finds this Kasperle, let him guard it carefully, until it awakens, for it is a genuine Kasperle. My apprentice, John Henry Pumpel, maliciously gave Kasperle a sleep potion, a magic elixir, which my grandfather once brought with him from Italy. In the course of time he will wake up again. But it is devilish stuff, and nobody knows now how it is made. Kasperle has been

sleeping for four weeks, and since there is gossip in the neighborhood that I have magic in the house, I prefer to lock him up in the chest. I am making a note of this, because no person knows how long he may live, and it is possible that Kasperle might fall into strange hands. Pumpel got what was coming to him all right, more blows than he cared for; he'll remember them the rest of his life.

My son is to know the secret and he is to tell his son and so on, until Kasperle wakes up. Everyone is to be good and kind to Kasperle and not harm him in any way. Only take care that he is carefully watched, for he often has, especially in spring, a mad desire to run away, and he might come to grief out in the wide world. However, he also has a longing to return to the forest cottage."

"That, Master Ephraim, my grandfather, wrote," said Master Friedolin as he finished reading. "And now I know why peddler Pumpel wanted the chest so badly; he knew what was in it. The genuine Kasperle, just to think of it! And he has slept almost ninety years."

"A miracle, really a miracle!" To Frau Annette the story was duly mysterious, and she cast sidelong, mistrustful glances at Kasperle.

The latter kept nodding, a trifle thoughtful, a trifle sad; and Liebetraut suddenly felt very sorry for the little fellow. She stepped

up to him, patted him gently, and said kindly: "He must have a new little jacket by all means; just look, his is all falling to pieces."

Kasperle looked up at the pretty maiden and saw the kindly look in her eyes; then he fell in love with her. He leaned up against her and begged: "Make me a jacket right away! I'll follow you forever."

Liebetraut immediately thought of Master Ephraim's words, and she asked quickly: "Always follow and never run away?"

"No, never run away," promised Kasperle faithfully.

"Do you give your word of honor, little Kasperle?" Liebetraut held the little fellow's hand firmly, and he nodded again and affirmed: "I'll never run away, but—I don't want to be put in the chest again."

"Heaven forbid, you'll never be put in there again!" said Master Friedolin. He had just taken up his knife and was beginning to give the doll he was carving the same expression Kasperle wore as he looked up at Liebetraut so beseechingly. Hurrah, how well he succeeded! His carving never went so easily. The master thought to himself: Ah, now Master Friedolin's dolls will begin to be popular at markets and fairs!

Kasperle, however, was rubbing his eyes in a final attempt to get thoroughly awake, and the more he looked around the better he liked it in the forest cottage. Then he suddenly turned a somersault for joy. Hoop-la! High over Mother Annette, he went. And before the little woman realized what had happened to her,

Kasperle was already sitting on the wainscoting and beginning to play catch with the bright pewter plates.

"Wait, you rascal!" scolded Mother Annette, and then heaved a sigh. "Goodness me, we have a regular hobgoblin in the house."

Now, Kasperle was hardly a hobgoblin, but he was a good-for-nothing rascal. This the cottagers observed the very first day. There was a continuous crashing and banging going on in the little house. One minute he was up high, the next down low. He crept into all the corners, and whenever he found a piece of the old furniture he let out a loud scream. He couldn't tell much about how things were formerly, for he didn't know; he had forgotten everything in his sleep. But objects and their names he still remembered. He kept calling Mother Annette, Madam Erdmute. She didn't like this a bit. For her Kasperle was on the whole a little too rough, and she was glad when it was time to go to bed. She commanded: "To bed, to bed! To let the light burn at night and the sun shine uselessly by day is extravagance. Hurry, to bed!"

Then Kasperle set up a terrible howl. "I don't want to go to sleep, I don't want to go to sleep! I have just slept nearly ninety years and I'm not tired any more."

"Good gracious, I confess, ninety years is a long time; one ought to be slept out by then!" said the master. "Kasperle may stay up."

"Stay up alone? Heaven forbid, he'd make a pretty mess of things! That will never do," said Mother Annette.

"I will stay up with him; I will finish his jacket," said Liebetraut, for she had just started to make a new little coat for him.

At first Mother Annette hesitated, staying up didn't quite suit her. But Master Friedolin thought it wouldn't be so bad, and besides Kasperle did really need a decent coat.

So Liebetraut was finally allowed to stay up. The foster parents went to bed and fidgety Kasperle promised to be quiet and not to knock over chairs, tables, chests, and everything else. He seated himself in a corner of the sofa and looked on well behaved while Liebetraut sewed. "Make the kind of jacket that regular little boys wear," he begged.

"But why do you ask that?" Liebetraut looked at the little lad astonished. Then he blinked his eyes and muttered, "Everyone doesn't need to see that I'm a Kasperle!"

"Oh, Kasperle," exclaimed Liebetraut, "I see already that you are thinking of running away. That won't do. You shall have a regular Kasperle coat. See, I'm putting the grass-green, the fire-red and the sky-blue dots on it."

Kasperle mumbled and sulked a little, but when Liebetraut cautioned him: "Remember your promise!" he hung his head and quieted down. At the same time he began to look sad, and Liebetraut said compassionately: "Tell me a story, Kasperle!"

"You tell me something, Liebetraut!" exclaimed Kasperle. "Oh, please, please, please. Kasperle loves to hear stories!"

"Well, then, listen!" said Liebetraut, and she began to tell him dear little stories about woods and flowers, about roguish

forest sprites, and about happy human children. She related and related, and once when she hesitated a moment Kasperle cried out immediately: "More, more!"

But later Liebetraut suddenly noticed that Kasperle was perfectly quiet. She dropped her work, looked up, and behold—Kasperle had fallen asleep. She laughed quietly to herself. Um hum, she thought, anyone who has slept ninety years and then can't stay awake a single night is nothing but a little lazy-bones. She, herself, kept sewing diligently, never noticing that out of doors day was dawning. Just as she took her last stitch, the door opened and Mother Annette entered. "But, child," exclaimed the latter, "the lamp is burned way down and——"

"Kasperle is asleep," said Liebetraut, holding the finished jacket aloft, "and I am finished."

"Thank heaven, the little will-o'-the-wisp can still sleep!" Mother Annette laughed. "I was afraid," she continued, "he wouldn't be able to sleep again for ninety years. Then we would have had to lock him up in the chest again."

"I don't want to be locked in the chest again," screamed Kasperle frightened. These last words had wakened him. And in fright he turned a somersault straight over the table. Hoop-la! He bumped right into Master Friedolin who was just coming out of the bedroom, and the good master exclaimed in fright: "Oh ho, it's plain to be seen there's a Kasperle in the house!"



CHAPTER III

What Happened at the Forest Lake

Kasperle had been in the forest cottage a whole week now, and he got into more mischief than ten boys could possibly have gotten into in a whole year.

Good gracious, what didn't the little fellow do! He was always sitting somewhere where he ought not! Once he climbed into the cupboard; another time, when he was in the pantry, he fell into the milk; another time he opened the stove door and a cloud of soot blew through the room. On other occasions he would get into Frau Annette's sewing basket till he had the patches scattered everywhere. So that Master Friedolin often had to threaten: "Just you wait, I'll put you back in the chest again." Then Kasperle would cry and weep so piteously that Master Friedolin would always forgive him.

Liebtraut scolded him the least of anyone, although the little good-for-nothing played many a trick on her. Of course he was always very confiding afterwards and knew how to get on the good side of Liebtraut, so that she was never angry at him for any length of time. She always smoothed matters over for him with the foster parents, too; and in spite of everything Frau Annette and Master Friedolin had their fun also with the little rascal.

The forest cottage was small, and Kasperle began to feel the same longing he had had a hundred years before. Life in the forest cotttage became very monotonous; and since he was not allowed to go into the woods alone, he had a great longing to do that very thing. He thought more and more how fine it would be if he could only rove through the world once again.

Liebtraut was quick to observe Kasperle's longing, and she warned him every day: "Remember your promise." Kasperle would nod and sigh and think to himself: Wouldn't it be fine if one could throw a promise in the water or burn it in the stove in order to be rid of it.

Once—it was on a very beautiful day—Liebtraut went to Schöna. She had to do all sorts of errands, for Whitsunday was drawing near. Frau Annette was stirring about in the house, tidying things up, for she wanted everything as neat as wax for the occasion. While she was doing this, Kasperle kept getting in the way, for he flitted from room to room like a will-o'-the-wisp. First he was here, then he was there, now he upset the scrub pail,

then he poked the broomstick through a windowpane, till Frau Annette became very angry with the little good-for-nothing. In dismay, she finally exclaimed: "Go to the master!"

Kasperle didn't have to be told twice. He ran out hastily and hunted behind the house for Master Friedolin. There he stood painting his new Kasperle dolls. They were set up in rank and file on wooden pegs, each looking more comical than the other, for they had all been carved in the image of the little live Kasperle.

"Hurrray!" shouted Kasperle, "that's me"; and quicker than a wink he touched the first doll lightly on the nose. His finger stuck, for the paint was still wet.

"You awkward wretch!" scolded Master Friedolin more impatient than usual, "go away, you've no business here!"

Kasperle ran away feeling very sad. He ran into the house, then out again. If they send me away, he thought to himself, then I shall go. Then my promise to Liebetraut doesn't count. And on the spur of the moment he decided to run into the woods a short way. He was very happy. The birds warbled and sang in the tree tops, and the leaves rustled, and on the ground tender young flowers were blooming. Kasperle stalked happily onward. There was one path on which the sun was shining; another lost itself in the deep shadows. Kasperle reflected a moment which to choose. He finally chose the shadowy path, and by so doing he soon came to a small forest lake with water lilies growing in it. To Kasperle's great surprise he found several boys in swimming. They were splashing around in the cool water, having a fine time; and



Kasperle slipped into the trousers and jacket.

Kasperle would have liked to get in with them, but he was a little afraid, not only of the water, but of the boys. Therefore, he only sneaked along the edge very cautiously, and soon he happened upon the clothing which the boys had taken off. Hurray, this is fine! he thought. Now I'll throw away my Kasperle jacket and put on a jacket and pair of trousers belonging to the boys, and then I'll run out into the wide world. In his joy, he completely forgot his promise to Liebetraut. He crept behind a bush, pulled out a pair of trousers and a blue jacket, and slipped into them. The boys to whom they belonged must have been just about Kasperle's size, for they fitted him as if he had been molded into them. He took a tremendous delight in the whole procedure, and when he had finished dressing he threw himself into the grass and squealed with delight.

If the boys in the lake had not made so much noise themselves, they would have heard Kasperle. But they were splashing each other and diving in and out, so they didn't notice what was happening on shore. They didn't see a boy running hurriedly through the woods; not until a while later when they came out of the water did they discover what had happened. Fritz hunted for his trousers and couldn't find them. When Peter was ready to slip into his coat, search as he would, it was nowhere to be found. Only Christopher found his things intact. He puffed himself up like a frog and scolded them both. "Hunt!" he cried. "Goodness only knows where you put your things. My clothes are all together as they should be."

For Fritz and Peter this was carrying the joke too far. They felt sure that Christopher had hidden their clothes, and for such a trick they thought he deserved a beating. So one, two, three, they began to pounce upon him. But he was equal to the occasion and defended himself bravely. Biff! Bang! Soon all three were sprawling in the grass. They were shouting so that the birds nearly toppled off the trees in fright, and an especially fat lady frog fell into the lake in a swoon. Then all the frogs began to croak angrily, and who knows what wouldn't have happened, if a forester, who was just going through the woods, hadn't heard the noise. He was on hand in an instant and he didn't reflect long on how to restore peace. Zip—Fritz was soon standing on his feet, and biff—he had a box on the ear, and before either Peter or Christopher had time to think they received the same efficacious treatment. Terrified beyond words, they stood up before the forester as straight as a string, and they didn't even try to run away.

"Well, now, why were you fighting?" asked the forester. "Isn't it warm enough for you?"

Jiminy crickets! It was warm enough for the three of them all right, in spite of their cool bath just before! Each boy had a burning red cheek, for the forester had a strong hand. However, his sudden anger blew over hastily, he looked at them with a smile and, taking courage, they told him about their bad luck. Fritz and Peter accused Christopher, who defended himself vigorously, with the result that they nearly came to blows again.

The forester wrinkled his brow thoughtfully and, seizing Christopher firmly by the shoulders, he asked: "Did you hide the jacket and trousers?"



"No!" Christopher looked steadily at the forester with his heavenly blue eyes, and the latter could tell at a glance that he had told the truth. But where had the things gone? Could it be that they were stolen in the woods which it was his duty to keep

guard over? This seeming highly improbable to the forester, he grumbled: "Perhaps you didn't wear the things at all?"

"But mine were pants!" exclaimed Fritz indignantly.

Well, of course, one couldn't go from Schönauf to the woods very well without trousers, the forester could see that. But good-for-nothing boys could have played the joke on their comrades, therefore he said: "Run home quickly. Undoubtedly some good-for-nothing scamp took the things for a joke!"

"But I can't go home without trousers!" cried Fritzie, this time very much distressed.

What a mixed-up state of affairs! The forester reflected a moment. He had raised three boys who were now grown up and had gone out into the wide world, so perhaps his wife had kept some of their clothing. To get to his house was a round-about way to Schönauf, but at least it was through the woods so that one could go without trousers. At worst, only birds and trees would laugh at the curious little lad. So the forester told the boys to follow him; Fritz without trousers, Peter without a coat. Christopher went along to keep them cheered up.

The forester's wife was astonished at the sight of the guests her husband was bringing home. But she was tender-hearted and sympathetic, and fortunately she had saved many articles of clothing that had belonged to her boys, who were now grown up. She brought these out, and they found trousers for Fritzie and a coat for Peter. Since the coat had shiny buttons and the trousers had a pair of hand-embroidered red silk suspenders attached, Christo-

pher was almost sorry that he still had his own things. The kind-hearted woman told them that if they didn't find their own clothes they might keep these things as far as she was concerned.

The boys departed from the forester's house well pleased. It gave them a feeling of importance to have had such an adventure, and when they met Liebetraut near Schönauf they told her what had happened. She said just what the forester had: "Someone has played a trick on you. It was a couple of good-for-nothings, no doubt."

Now there were several boys in Schönauf capable of doing just such a trick as that. As soon as the three came to the first house in the village they assumed a reproachful air and they related their adventure to everyone who would listen to it. Someone said it might have been Jackie Miller, someone else suggested crazy Hans. At any rate the three boys had not been home very long before a tittle-tattle and gossip was circulating around that was bitter indeed. Finally all of the boys were able to prove where they had been, and Fritz, Peter, and Christopher came pretty near getting a pommeling from their indignant comrades. But it was not long before they all made up with each other, for they liked to get together to discuss the singular incident. All Schönauf was stirred up over it. Who could it have been?

Even Liebetraut could not help thinking about the strange occurrence on her way home. She found herself involuntarily trying to find the lost articles belonging to the boys. Suddenly she noticed something hanging in the bushes. It looked like a bright-colored

rag. Inasmuch as Liebetaut was not timid, she went up to it courageously, and as she drew close to the bush, she exclaimed loudly: "Kasperle, but, Kasperle, what are you doing here?"

But there was no reply, and then for the first time Liebetaut saw that it was nothing but Kasperle's jacket hanging in the bushes. The wind filled it out, so that it looked as if Kasperle were inside. But of him there was not a trace far and wide. Liebetaut recalled the complaint of the boys who had lost their trousers and jacket, and a very wicked suspicion crept into her mind. What if Kasperle had run away? Hastily taking the jacket from the bush, she ran toward the forest cottage as fast as she could go. She thrust open the door and rushed into the room, calling to her mother: "Where is Kasperle?"

"Outdoors with father," answered Frau Annette, who was busy preparing supper.

So Liebetaut ran out to Father Friedolin. He was just finishing painting the last Kasperle doll and seemed much surprised when Liebetaut inquired for Kasperle. "He's inside. He ran into the house again, didn't he?"

But Kasperle was neither inside nor out of doors. Liebetaut searched the whole house, looking into every nook and corner, opening every chest and drawer, and calling tenderly the name of the little rascal. There was no answer. He had disappeared and vanished for good. Liebetaut ran out into the woods, and Master Friedolin followed her. They hunted and they called, but no Kasperle could they find. The sun had already set some time

before, the birds were asleep in their nests, only the echo of their voices kept resounding through the woods, as they called: "Kasperle, Kasperle, do come back home!"

The moon came up and cast its silver light over the forest cottage, and as it peeped into the window it could see three people sitting sadly at the table lamenting sorrowfully: "Our Kasperle has run away." They didn't think of all the foolish capers he had cut up; they thought only of how much they loved him. Liebetraut buried her face in her hands and wept bitterly over her naughty little companion. "Oh, Kasperle, Kasperle," she wailed, "why *did* you leave us and what will happen to you out in the wide world?"

CHAPTER IV

In Protzendorf with Farmer Strohkopf

But where had Kasperle gone?

Dressed in Fritz's trousers and Peter's jacket he had speedily run into the forest, happy in his new freedom. In fact the little rascal felt so happy that he forgot all about the good things he had had in the little forest house, and he decided to wander far into the world. And since he knew that the roads leading to Schönau and Lindendorf might be traveled by those who had seen him at the forest house, he took the road leading to Protzendorf. This road was generally avoided by the inhabitants of the other villages; and, indeed, Kasperle did not meet a living soul, though the day was beautiful and all things radiant with sunshine. From sheer delight at the success of his escape he began to turn somersaults along the way. He fairly rolled, like a ball in a bowling alley, and came very near rolling into Protzendorf. But unfortunately there was a large stone in the middle of the road, and Kasperle dashed into it with a crash; and for a moment he lay paralyzed with fear. But since the stone did not speak, and as no one approached, Kasperle collected himself, sat up, and looked about

him. Before him, a little farther in the forest, lay Protzendorf. It looked stately and prosperous; and on this occasion the smoke ascended from the chimneys in greater profusion than usual, because the farmers' wives were all baking cakes for Whitsunday.

Kasperle, raising aloft his large nose and sniffing the air, caught the odor from the baking cakes. "My, how good it smells!" Suddenly he felt the pangs of hunger gnawing within him, and he opened his unusually large mouth and gave all the appearance of a young raven expecting food to be dropped into its open bill. But it did not occur to any of the women in Protzendorf to bring their freshly baked cake and give it to Kasperle. Not at all; though Kasperle sighed appealingly. Finally he aroused himself, got up, stretched himself, and proceeded into the village.

Now it happened that Mathias Strohkopf, a fat farmer and the richest man in Protzendorf, had, on this particular day, retired early from work. In fact he had often done so, for he was so lazy that even the villagers of Protzendorf, who were all a little indolent, called him "Lazy Mathias." The farmer was now sitting before his door and beside him, on a table, was his afternoon luncheon. As he took a bite of bread and butter, there appeared before him a plate of freshly baked cakes which his wife had just brought him.

And just then Kasperle came along, too. He saw the fat farmer but he also saw the cakes, and as they looked so tempting, he did not hesitate in the least as to what he should do; he walked up to the table and—one, two, three—put a piece of cake

into his mouth, and then another; and before Farmer Strohkopf knew what had happened the cakes were half eaten.

Goodness gracious! The farmer had never in his whole life seen anything of this kind. "You impertinent scamp!" he cried, and he raised his heavy hand and was about to strike him. But Kasperle, by no means slow, took a leap over the table and over the farmer and remained a few paces distant from his adversary, seated on the ground. "I was so terribly hungry," he complained, cutting at the same time such a comical figure that the lazy Mathias, in spite of his anger, could not restrain his laughter. He had never seen such an uncanny, droll little fellow. "Where in the world did you come from?" he exclaimed.

Then Kasperle, still seated on the ground, drew himself a little nearer and sighed: "From far, far away! I am a poor forsaken little orphan and haven't a single friend in the world."

And so touching was Kasperle's appeal that the fat farmer was greatly moved. However, he replied rather gruffly: "But that is no reason why you should eat other people's cakes." At the same time he beckoned Kasperle to come nearer.

And the little rascal did come to him, all submissive, and with every appearance of one who was as innocent as a lamb. Farmer Strohkopf was not keen enough to see how his little sparrow-like eyes danced and twinkled with mischief. "You were indeed very bold at first, but I will not hold it against you," said the farmer, now more kindly disposed. "Just now I need a goose boy, and for that purpose I am willing to take you. It never occurred to you



The farmer had never seen anything of this kind.

that the rich Strohkopf would ever hire a boy like you, did it?"

With this Kasperle opened his mouth as if it had been a gate to a watch tower, for he had no idea of what a goose boy was like. He didn't say yes and he didn't say no; and the fat farmer did not press the question further. He thought, as a matter of course, if anyone was permitted to come to Strohkopf, even as a goose boy, he might consider himself very lucky. Jiminy crickets, what an honor! And as his head servant, Florian, was just coming out of the house, Strohkopf called to him: "Florian, we have a new goose boy. Here, take him along with you."

Now, Florian, as a rule, never opened his mouth except for the purpose of eating. And he also believed that one should not be bothered very much with a goose boy. Quick as a flash he seized Kasperle by the coat collar and dragged him along with him. In this unceremonious manner he took him to the goose shed, opened it, thrust him into it, and with a gruff, "There now!" locked the door after him. They will have to get acquainted with one another, thought Florian, and that will take till supper time.

There sat Kasperle, in the goose shed, and his white and gray charges surrounded him, quacking. It was not at all pleasant for the little fellow. He had never been in a goose shed, and as the geese pointed their long bills toward him and cackled so noisily, he was very much frightened. He made up a terrible face, and as the geese had never seen a live Kasperle, their strange guest appeared to them very unusual. Their quacking grew louder and louder; Kasperle was frightened out of his wits, and he looked

about him for a place of safety. In one corner of the shed there was a tall stand that looked very much like a bench, and Kasperle, always nimble, leaped upon it. But in the separate compartments of this stand there sat big, fat, brave geese, hatching out their broods. They were terribly frightened as Kasperle clambered up on their nesting bench. They arose from their nests, hissing, and Kasperle, in terror, clung to the frail stand. But in doing so he disturbed its balance and it fell from its place to the floor with a crash. There lay Kasperle; there lay the nests and eggs; and, hissing and quacking, the geese furiously attacked him. Such a mess! To be disturbed while hatching their eggs—that was too much! Snip—one bit his leg; snap—another clamped his ear; another hissing bill made straight for his nose. Kasperle screamed, the geese clattered louder and louder. It was an infernal turmoil!

“Jiminy! What’s going on in the goose shed?” shouted Caroline, the maid, who was out in the courtyard. She thought possibly a marten had broken into the shed; so she hastened to it in all speed, tore open the door, and saw, amidst all the confusion, Kasperle, seated on the floor of the shed, screaming violently. His mouth was wide open, so wide in fact that it frightened Caroline into shutting the door with a bang. “A goblin! There’s a goblin in the goose shed!” she exclaimed.

The noise attracted the farmer’s wife. Berta, the housemaid, came, and Florian also. The latter tore into the goose shed and hauled out Kasperle, who was still screaming with fright.

“Goodness me, what is that!” exclaimed the farmer’s wife,

holding her hands over her head. Berta buried her face in her apron. "What a sight!" she said.

"A goblin, a hobgoblin!" screamed Caroline.

"No, it's our new goose boy," growled Florian, "and now he is going to get a whipping." Whack, whack, whack—the blows fell upon poor Kasperle, for when Florian administered punishment there was no joke about it. Kasperle, losing all sense of hearing and sight, roared murderously; and finally the fat farmer himself appeared on the scene and wanted to know what it was all about. His wife and the three maid servants tried to explain by talking at the same time, Kasperle screamed, the geese cackled noisily in their shed, but Florian merely pointed toward the shed and growled: "See for yourself." And, not satisfied with the punishment he had already given Kasperle, whack, whack, whack—he belabored him again with blows, until the farmer's wife snatched the helpless little fellow from him. "You'll knock him to pieces," she remonstrated.

"He deserved what I gave him," snarled Florian.

"Yes, plague take him, he did deserve it," roared Farmer Strohkopf, who had, in the meantime, inspected the shed and had seen what mischief Kasperle had committed; in fact he was so angry that he himself wanted to take a hand in whipping the little rogue. But his wife, whose heart was touched by Kasperle's misery, clung to his arm and would not permit him to strike the blow that was about to fall. Farmer Strohkopf himself now had a

sudden change of mood also. As he got a good view of Kasperle's piteous face, his anger cooled; indeed, he was even compelled to laugh, for Kasperle did present a comical spectacle. And presently the others were all in the same mood; they were forced to laugh; even Florian grinned.

However much Kasperle might rub his back and sigh dejectedly, he was laughed at nevertheless. He thought of Liebetraut: she would not have laughed; but, of course, now she would be sorry, too, because he had not kept his promise but had run away. Kasperle looked dejected; no, he could not go back to the forest house any more! Then, too, he was afraid of the dark night, alone in the woods, so he quietly followed the farmer's wife into the house; and as he entered the house and the odors of the kitchen reminded him of good things to eat, he immediately became happy. Hurray! It is not so bad, after all, to be with the rich farmer, and herding geese could not be very hard work either, so he thought.

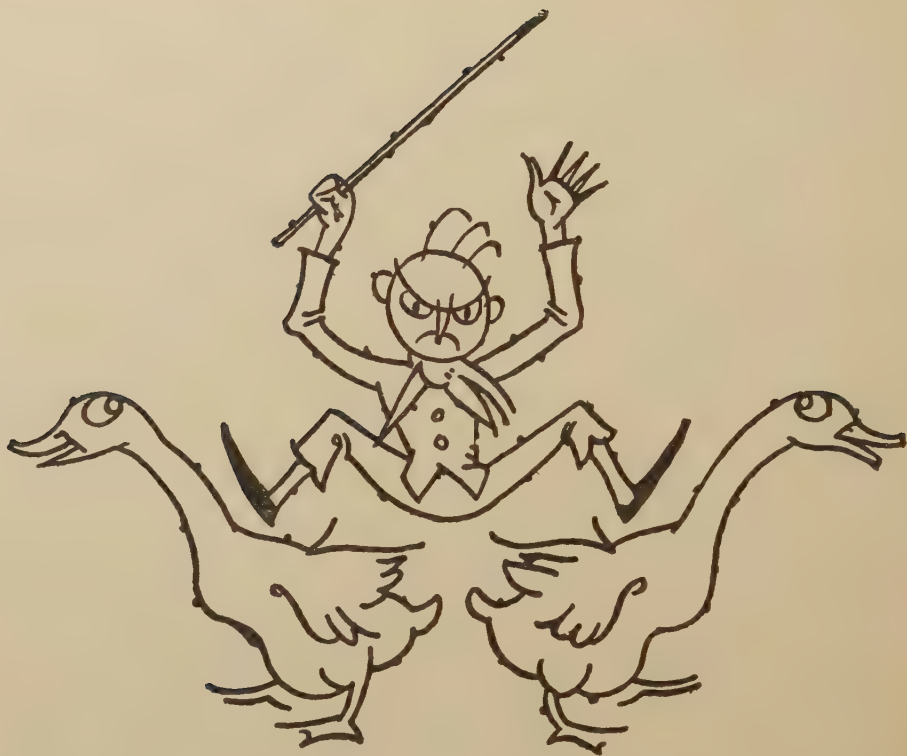
When supper was served he took his place at the very foot of the table. At the head of it sat the farmer and his wife, and beside them, Florian; then came Caroline and the other men and women servants. They had all worked hard and now were chiefly concerned with eating. So no one paid much attention to the new goose boy, until Berta suddenly began to giggle. Then Paul, who sat beside her, looked up and also began to take notice of the new arrival. Surely there never was a more comical little fellow than

he! Paul exploded with laughter, and then Caroline and Mina took notice and saw how Kasperle opened and shut his mouth like a trap; then, all of a sudden, everyone at the table laughed, but loudest of all, the big, fat farmer. No sooner had Kasperle observed that he was laughed at by all, than, quick as a flash, he began to make faces. He wiggled about in his chair and cut all kinds of capers, until even gloomy Florian joined in the laughter. The farmer's wife was afraid the farmer would burst his waistband, he laughed so much. She cautioned repeatedly: "Be careful now, don't laugh yourself sick!" But immediately she herself began laughing again, louder than ever. Caroline laughed so heartily that she fell under the table, and Paul tumbled out of his chair. Then Florian seized Kasperle by the coat tails saying: "This is enough for to-day; stop it now or something else will break!" And Florian took Kasperle away and put him in a tiny bedroom with a grated window, just large enough for a single bed. Kasperle was allowed to get into it; which he did very gladly, and he was not in the least concerned when Florian muttered: "To-morrow morning you'll have to tend the geese."

"Rrrrrrrrrrrrr!" Florian, frightened, turned about. What in the world was that? "Rrrrr!" It sounded again, and now Florian observed that it was the new goose boy who was snoring so terribly. "Nonsense," growled Florian, and shook the little fellow. But shake him as he would, Kasperle snored in Kasperle fashion like a giant buzz saw: "Rrrrr! Rrrrr!"

"The deuce take him! He's crazy," snarled Florian. So he

carefully locked the bedroom door, for he felt that he could not trust Kasperle; and he thought to himself that the farmer might better have taken on someone else as a goose boy.



CHAPTER V

Tending Geese

The following morning Florian wakened Kasperle, bright and early, and since Kasperle only muttered and grumbled and showed no signs of getting up, Florian dashed a pitcher of water over him—kersplash. Then, you may be sure, Kasperle got up in a hurry; and when he saw tall Florian standing over him, with a

face as ugly as a bear's, he became terribly frightened. Everything he was commanded to do he did willingly and quietly. He followed Florian out to the goose shed and stood there like a poor little sinner while his enemies marched out in rank and file. Florian handed him a long staff, saying: "Go now and watch the geese! You can go with the shepherd!"

Now the shepherd was Florian's brother, but he was even more quiet and sullen than he. His name was Damian and in the village they called him "Dumb Damian" because he didn't like to talk. And on this particular morning he didn't open his mouth once, he only made signs, and Kasperle, with his flock of geese, followed at his heels. They went through the village and beyond, over the meadows, till they came to a babbling little brooklet; here Damian pointed his stick toward the ground. As quick as a flash, Kasperle, thinking it was up to him to follow suit, did the same thing. But when Damian marched on with his sheep, Kasperle began to follow him again. Damian didn't notice this at first; it was only when the geese began to cackle just a little bit too loudly that he discovered it. Exasperated, he turned around; and without saying a word, he pointed with his stick in the direction of the brooklet. Kasperle, in imitation, raised his stick and pointed in that direction, too.

This made Dumb Damian as mad as a hornet. To be compelled to talk so early in the morning! That was really too much exertion! "Stay there!" he yelled at Kasperle. The little fellow was frightened; he tumbled backward, and the geese, on whose

feet he nearly stepped, seemed to take offense at his behavior. They cackled angrily and refused to follow the goose boy at first. But Kasperle with his long stick began to gain more courage; he waved it frantically about in the air, and at the same time made as ugly a face as he knew how. The geese were instilled with fear and began to march along, one behind the other in orderly fashion, till they reached the brooklet. Here they cackled contentedly; for here, they thought, they could feast and take it easy. But Kasperle thought otherwise. He had been much impressed with the way the geese had marched ahead of him in such orderly fashion, and he thought of a way to have some fun. He began to chase the geese. As soon as one stood still—whack!—he would feel the long staff. And no matter how much the poor creatures squawked and cackled, the goose boy kept chasing them around and around.

He, himself, kept jumping and hopping about as if he were trying to cut up capers before the geese. The poor things were hardly able to take another step, their cackling grew fainter and fainter, but just the same Kasperle's long staff kept whacking them and so they kept on going, around and around.

Dumb Damian had as a rule nothing else to think of but his own sheep. To-day, however, he kept thinking of the new goose boy, because his brother had warned him, "Be on your guard!" Since his sheep were grazing only a short distance away, he thought he would investigate.

Good heavens! What kind of game did he see! Kasperle was jumping about, and the geese were going around in a circle,

though it was evident to Damian at once that the geese were not enjoying themselves. So this was how the poor waddlers were to get fat!

Whack, whack! Kasperle struck the fattest goose right on the head. Then somebody grabbed Kasperle by the seat of the pants. Dumb Damian didn't waste any time arguing. He whacked right and left with his staff and Kasperle felt the blows very perceptibly. The geese looked on with wide-open beaks. Their little goose boy was getting his dose now. If the oldest goose had been able to talk, she would have said something like this:

*"What you don't wish others to do to you
That to others you must not 'do!"*

Finally Damian thought he had beaten Kasperle long enough. Kasperle thought so, too, and he was howling pitifully when Damian set him down in the grass. Again, Dumb Damian hadn't uttered a single word, but Kasperle was wise enough to understand the meaning of his blows. He was so completely dumfounded that he kept on sitting in the grass; as for the geese, they were so tired and hungry that it never occurred to them to run away. So things went along quietly again down by the brooklet. Kasperle stretched himself out full length, held his staff upright in the air, and began to reflect that it wouldn't be such a bad idea to run away again.

In Protzendorf the people had talked a good deal about

Farmer Strohkopf's comical goose boy, and there were two boys in particular who were consumed with curiosity to see him. Both were named August, but because the father of the one was a wind miller and the father of the other a water miller the boys were named Windgus and Watergus respectively. They were two of a kind, good-for-nothings in fact, but they were great pals. Their fathers often quarreled with each other, the one condemning the wind, the other the water. But Windgus and Watergus carried out their pranks in common. On the afternoon before Whitsuntide they went to look up Kasperle. Perhaps he would know some jokes and pranks that would be new to them.

They found Strohkopf's goose boy lying in the grass, and when they called to him, he pretended at first not to hear, but Windgus and Watergus knew how to get a boy to talk. They took him by the legs and pulled him along through the grass. Finally Kasperle jumped up in the midst of his geese.

Good heavens! How frightened the geese were! They thought the merry-go-round performance was going to start again. But instead of that, there was loud laughter. Windgus and Watergus found Kasperle a very comical little chap as he started on his antics. Gee, thought Windgus, if I could only make as funny faces as he does!

Kasperle could see by their laughter that the two had not come as enemies, so he changed his ugly expression into a pleasant one as quick as a flash. Within two minutes all three were the best of friends, although the village boys did feel that they had never

seen such a queer little chap before. What grimaces he could make, how he could twist his arms and legs! A person would have to be a regular kill-joy, like Dumb Damian, not to laugh; but Windgus and Watergus were no kill-joys, and they laughed till they nearly burst. Kasperle told them about his affair with the shepherd, and both good-for-nothings agreed that he was a gruffian and that the stunt with the geese was clever. "Do it again!" begged Windgus.

"Look first to see where Damian is," exclaimed Watergus. He jumped up, made an investigation and, returning with a grin, announced to his comrades: "He is asleep."

This was luck for the geese, because when Kasperle heard this news he was eager to play a trick on sleeping Damian. So they left the geese to take care of themselves and all three sneaked up to the shepherd. And the truth was, he was lying under a large wild pear tree, fast asleep. His sheep were grazing a little way off, tended by Flick, his faithful dog.

There stood the three friends looking at Damian and scheming how to play a trick on him.

"Let's put a frog on his face," suggested Windgus.

"No, let's cut off his buttons," said Watergus.

Kasperle had his eye on the small slope behind the pear tree. I can hide behind that, he thought, as he turned over in his mind the project he had in view; namely to turn a somersault right over Damian's stomach. Kasperle's little eyes glistened mischievously. He was about to tell his plan to his comrades, when Flick

suddenly started to bark angrily. For he seemed to sense the bad intentions of the three who were standing there beside his master.

Ho, but the three rascals took to their heels! They rushed down the slope in a jiffy. They were gone! And when Dumb Damian awoke, he looked around in bewilderment. Why had Flick barked with such a loud and warning bark? He didn't do that for nothing! Perhaps it had something to do with the goose boy, the bad rascal! The shepherd got up to look and saw all three boys sitting quietly and peacefully on the edge of the brook. Kasperle was holding his staff in his hand in true goose-boy fashion. The geese were eating contentedly on the turf. Everything seemed peaceful, so Damian turned back.

At evening Kasperle drove his geese home as if he had tended geese all his life. The head farm hand who saw him coming thought to himself: Well, he may amount to something yet! Only his face has such a roguish look. But just then he noticed Damian shaking his head and that was always a bad sign.

Windgus and Watergus had promised that on the morrow, a holiday, they would show Kasperle the village, every nook and cranny of it. For it never occurred to them but what Farmer Strohkopf would keep his geese penned up on a holiday. But Florian again drove Kasperle out of bed at an unearthly hour. He thought that a goose boy who had been employed only one day didn't need a vacation; holiday cakes ought to satisfy him.

When Kasperle came stumbling out to the barn yard, half asleep, he found Damian waiting there with his flock of sheep.

Damian felt sorry for the sheep. Why should they stay penned up a beautiful day like this? So once more they started out together peacefully. When they came to the brooklet Damian raised his staff threateningly. Quick as a flash, Kasperle raised his and



made just as threatening a face as the shepherd did. Damian thought this was carrying things just a little bit too far. To think that such a bold little imp should try to ridicule him! He went for Kasperle, but Kasperle was equal to the occasion and rescued him-

self by darting between the shepherd's long legs. Kerplump! Damian lay stretched out his full length in the brooklet. The water splashed up high, the geese fled in terror, and Flick came running hurriedly to see what had happened to his master. Kasperle, however, drove his geese down the hill a way, as fast he could. He kept on running and the poor waddlers had to run, too, till they came to an empty shed. Into this he drove the geese and fastened the door shut from the outside, and then himself ran out into the wide world once more. He had had his fill of being a goose boy.

But Dumb Damian was quickly upon the heels of the fugitive. From a distance he saw how Kasperle had concealed the geese. He took longer strides, and Kasperle heard him coming. He was quick to perceive that whether he rolled along or turned somersaults, he was bound to be overtaken. He climbed an ascent, up to where the highway passed. There he might stand a chance of escaping. But Damian came nearer and nearer. Just at the critical moment a beautiful carriage approached. It was drawn by four horses, and beside the coachman sat a stately servant. Kasperle didn't take time to reflect; he jumped on behind as quickly as he could. To be sure, he had only a narrow place to sit; but even so, it was better than falling into Damian's hands.

The shepherd ran after the coach for some distance, yelling loudly, but no one paid any attention to him. Then came a turn in the road—gone were the coach and Kasperle, and Damian returned angrily to his sheep. Now they had to graze with the

geese. Toward noon they all went home and when they reached the barn yard Dumb Damian shouted angrily: "Escaped!"

"Who? A sheep?" asked the farmer, who just then happened along.

"No!" Damian shook his head. "Kasper!"

"What! Ran away? My new goose boy?" the farmer was dumfounded. How was that possible? No one had ever run away from him before! "Why did he do it?" he asked. "Tell me!"

To give an account of the affair, and on a holiday at that, was too much for Damian. He shook his head and tapped his forehead with his finger which meant that Kasperle wasn't sane. Then he went to his room, lay down on his bed, and slept away the beautiful Whitsunday afternoon.

But Windgus and Watergus raised a great howl when they heard of the disappearance of their new friend. They didn't hesitate to say that Damian alone was to blame, and they complained of the way he had beaten Kasperle, but they forgot to mention how the geese had been treated. Farmer Strohkopf was furiously angry and, till the third day of the celebration, it was said by everyone in the village that Dumb Damian had mistreated a poor orphan boy. Florian was the only one who didn't accuse him.

But on the third day of the Pentecost which was still being celebrated very agreeably in Protzendorf, something very strange occurred. A man with a green wagon happened along and was soon busily engaged in setting up a Kasperle theater in the middle of the village green, one that was worth seeing. It was fine

enough to have been exhibited at the largest of the annual fairs. The dolls were quite large and were very beautifully dressed. But to everyone Kasperle was the most pleasing of all. When he began to do his stunts, everyone was astonished, even the grown ups, and all of a sudden Farmer Strohkopf exclaimed: "Why, there's my goose boy!"

Jiminy crickets, it was he! Now the others recognized him. It was Kasper, the goose boy; he looked just like that when he used to sit at the table evenings, making his funny faces.

Then the robber chieftain of the Kasperle theater came out and Windgus and Watergus exclaimed: "That's him, too!" He looked just about as fierce as that when he was lying near the brooklet. It was indeed very queer, all of the dolls resembled Kasperle somewhat. The audience kept crowding up to the stage, till the Kasperle man heard the noise, back where he was. He came out and asked what had happened. Then he heard the story of the remarkable similarity. Fat Farmer Strohkopf told all about the runaway goose boy.

Oh, ho, then the Kasperle man did prick up his ears! "It's he, it's he!" he exclaimed loudly. "I must catch him! Where did he go? Tell me, tell me quickly!" The Kasperle man seized Dumb Damian by the coat button. All Damian did was to raise his hand, point toward the west, and mutter "Hm!" and not another word was to be gotten out of him.

Fat Farmer Strohkopf exclaimed however: "Oh, now I un-

derstand, the little rascal was a runaway! Where did he hail from? What did he do?"

Then the Kasperle man told the astonished people of Protzen-dorf the story of Kasperle, how he had slept so many many years in the chest and how Master Friedolin had rediscovered him. He said that he himself had been familiar with Master Friedolin's name for a long time, for he was known to puppet players far and wide. A short time ago he was in need of new puppets and when he bought them, he noticed they were much better than formerly. So it occurred to him to look up this skillful Master Friedolin sometime. And, since he just happened to be in the vicinity, he had called at the forest house yesterday. Everyone in the house was sad; and, upon inquiry, Master Friedolin had told him about the newly found and the newly lost Kasperle, who was running around in the wide world in someone else's coat and trousers. And he himself, the showman said, had undertaken to find Kasperle and to return him to the Master, for there is where he really belonged.

"You're right!" exclaimed Farmer Strohkopf. "Just you hunt for him and after you find him Master Friedolin must loan him to me. Ha! ha! ha! I never laughed so in my life, as I did over that comical little chap!"

"Of course, he is a genuine Kasperle," said the puppet showman; "he knows how to cut up capers!"

Just to think, that he had been their friend! Windgus and

Watergus looked at each other in blank amazement. "But never mind, we'll help find him; we'll go with the Kasperle man," they cried together.

Biff! Windgus got a box on the ear from his father, and Watergus' mother gave him a shove. "Are you crazy? You'll stay at home and go to school."

The wind miller didn't need to say anything; his expression spoke louder than words. So the two boys stayed at home. But the Kasperle man packed his belongings together and started on his search for Kasperle. As he left, farmer Strohkopf called to him: "I'll give you a dollar if you find him," for he was really very sorry not to have Kasperle sitting at his table cutting up capers for him.



CHAPTER VI

Kasperle in the Castle

Meantime, Kasperle was riding through the country contented. He was delighted with his breezy seat and the faster they drove the better he liked it. Now Master Friedolin wouldn't be able to find him so easily, nor Damian of all persons. For he was still terribly afraid of this silent shepherd. When people met the carriage, Kasperle nodded and bowed and people nodded

and bowed in return and the Count bowed cordially as he sat in the coach, only he wondered why people were always laughing so. Children of course would always follow on behind for a short distance, because the jolly little chap sitting in the back amused them very much.

Village after village passed by, and on and on the journey continued. Once the carriage passed through a woods. The leaves rustled and the birds sang. Kasperle noticed a little house in the distance and he thought of the forest cottage and Liebetraut. But the thought left his mind as quickly as it entered, for someone came strolling along and Kasperle's little mouse ears heard the footsteps. The person who was approaching was a very dignified, learned man, who had gone into the lonely woods this Whitsunday in order to ponder over a very learned book. When he saw the carriage approaching he stood still; and being a polite gentleman, he greeted the Count cordially, and the Count greeted him just as cordially and even leaned way out of the carriage. In so doing he noticed the learned man shrink back and raise his hands in terror, as if he beheld a ghost.

Hum, what did this mean? The Count wondered about it a good deal; as for Kasperle he kept joggling around on the back seat contentedly. He had just stuck up his nose and pulled one of his robber faces, so that anyone might well have been frightened.

For a while the learned man stood staring at the carriage in bewilderment. He said to himself: "That was Count Singer-



Kasperle was delighted with his breezy seat.

lingen's coach. What can he be thinking of to have such a hobgoblin sitting on behind! Unheard of!"

Finally the woods came to an end, and they approached a village where a bright castle stood on a rather lofty elevation. From its towers flags were fluttering merrily in the wind, and the windows glittered and gleamed in the sunlight. There was to be a wedding at the castle on the following day; to this the Count was going. Many beautiful carriages had driven up to the castle so far this day and the village children were waiting on the street, curious to see who else might come. When Count Singerlingen's coach passed by a great shriek of laughter arose; and, screaming and yelling, all the children followed on behind. The horses almost took fright at the noise, and Count Singerlingen kept shaking his head in despair. Things were unusual to-day! The coachman and the servant were very much annoyed too, but not one of the three had the slightest inkling that Kasperle was perched on behind.

As they came nearer and nearer to the castle the Count's coachman kept thinking to himself: One ought to drive up to a castle in some kind of style. Therefore he allowed the horses to walk slowly for a while to rest them up. Later he urged them on, approaching the castle at a trot and coming to a sudden halt.

Kasperle wasn't expecting this. He seemed to think the ride would continue indefinitely; and at this sudden jerk he lost his balance and tumbled from his seat, describing a wide semicircle.

The daughter of the castle lord was standing in front of the castle dressed in a rose-colored dress. She was to have given a hearty welcome to Count Singerlingen, but instead she exclaimed loudly: "Look, a boy fell off from the coach!"

Kasperle had fallen into the midst of a beautiful flower bed. He lay there stiff and rigid, without moving a muscle. Count Singerlingen exclaimed in surprise: "Where in the world did he come from?"

"He fell off from the carriage," said little Rosemary. "Oh, and now he's dead!"

"He was hanging on behind no doubt, youngsters often do it," grumbled the Count's old servant. "But you may be sure he isn't dead."

No, Kasperle was not dead, but somewhat stunned; and when two servants lifted him up, he made such a funny face that everyone who was standing near had to laugh.

The Count, to whom the castle belonged, and his wife, and the guests all came and stared at silly, silly Kasperle. Count Singerlingen kept looking at him through his eyeglass and remarking: "Comical, very comical!"

The castle lord wanted to know where he came from. Kasperle blinked his eyes, assumed a sad air and told exactly the same story he had told fat Farmer Strohkopf; namely, that he was a poor deserted orphan boy going out into the wide world without a single friend.

Oh, you rascal! thought the old servant, for Kasperle ap-

peared to him rather spooky. He would have liked to warn his master to beware of the little rogue. But Count Singerlingen felt exactly as Farmer Strohkopf had; he took a great liking to Kasperle. He therefore asked the mistress of the castle to take care of the little fellow until his return home. The Countess consented, but she secretly wondered where she would find a place for him to sleep. There were so many guests in the castle who had come to attend the wedding of the eldest Princess and within an hour, a real Duke was expected to arrive. So every corner was occupied and the Countess had even been compelled to borrow beds all over the neighborhood. Nevertheless, she told a servant to take him to the housekeeper, who could probably tend to him.

Oh, won't she be delighted with such a little dwarf! thought the servant. He took Kasperle by the arm, and in disgust he led him into the large kitchen where Frau Emma, the housekeeper, was inspecting a batch of cakes that had just come out of the oven.

Fine, I like it here! thought Kasperle sniffing contentedly. My how good the cakes smelled! A castle like this was better than a peasant's hut any day! But Frau Emma didn't say: "Fine," nor, "I like him" when she saw Kasperle. Instead she exclaimed angrily: "What shall I do with such a bugbear? I never saw such a looking youngster in all my life. Away with him, I can't use him here! He can help pare potatoes for aught I care."

"Don't want to," cried Kasperle; but now Frau Emma became very angry and said sternly: "He shall pare potatoes!"

And quick as a wink a maid took Kasperle and dragged him into an adjoining room. There sat three young girls, and she said to them: "Here is someone who has come to help you."

"He help us?" The three snickered aloud at the thought and then one of the girls took a large kitchen apron and tied it around Kasperle, while another handed him a dish and a third gave him a knife. Then all three exclaimed: "Now help us!"

My, but they had run across a jolly helper! Good gracious, talk about progress! Snip-snap, snip-snap, a piece of potato flew here, another there. Kasperle had soon cut the whole potato up into little bits. Then he wrapped his kitchen apron around his legs, threw the dish and knife upon the floor and screamed: "I'm hungry!"

The maids had to laugh. But soon two of them ran to get something for Kasperle to eat, while the third petted him and asked him where he came from. And Kasperle feasted and told his story, and ended finally by making faces. The maids had never seen anything like this before.

Later when Frau Emma approached the door, she stood and listened a while in indignation. Such laughter! She thrust the door open in a rage. There sat the three maids laughing and laughing while Kasperle did stunts on the kitchen table. The potatoes were not pared. Frau Emma never stood for such actions, so she went for them hammer and tongs, and the maids ducked their heads in terror. Kasperle she drove out of the room. "Go, help wash dishes," she commanded. "In there!" And she shoved

the little fellow into a large room where dishes were being washed and dried.

Here old Lizzie had charge of things and she made a wry face the minute she saw the little helper. "I can't use such a knee-high-to-a-grasshopper," she exclaimed. "Out with him, out! He'll break everything to pieces for me."

Well, thought Kasperle, injured, she might at least try me! And he intended to show her how skillful he was. So he took a clean dish towel from a pile which was lying on the table. Then he was about to take a plate from a rack in order to dry it neatly, for he had often noticed how Liebetraut did it, when old Lizzie shouted: "Wait, wait don't take hold the wrong way! The plates——" Bang—the plates all came tumbling down from above, before Lizzie could finish her warning. Hurrah, now there was some excitement! "Those were the best plates, the very best," wailed Lizzie. Several maids started to giggle. And to add to the confusion, the door opened, and an old servant stuck in his head and began to scold about the noise. From the other side Frau Emma was peering through a little sliding window and scolding too.

In all the turmoil Kasperle escaped without being noticed. Quick as a wink, he was gone! He sneaked along the wall till he came to a half-lighted cool passageway. Here the noise had died away somewhat, and Kasperle noticed that four doors opened out into the hall. Each had a little window which Kasperle could just manage to peep through by standing on his tiptoes. My, what a

pleasant sight greeted his eyes! He was looking into the pantries of the castle, in which the most delicious foods were kept. The little rascal's mouth began to water. Now for the first time he realized how hungry he still was. He tried first one door, then another, and then a third—they were all locked; but the fourth opened, for Frau Emma, being in such a hurry this day, had neglected to lock it. It was in just this room that the sweet things were stored: fruit tarts, cookies, and layer cakes covered with frosting.

Kasperle didn't hesitate very long. He began to sample and to devour. How good everything tasted! Much better, he thought, than the bread and cheese at Farmer Strohkopf's. In one corner stood a whole keg of whipped cream. Kasperle didn't know, at first, what this white foam was; and, inasmuch as he had once given way to his curiosity and tasted some soapsuds in the forest cottage, he thought this might possibly be something similar. But with his mania for stealing dainties he could not resist sticking in his finger and trying it. My, but it was good! He licked his finger off, delved in again, and then stuck his whole hand in. Since the keg stood rather high, he finally climbed up on the edge so as to get at it better.

Suddenly someone outside exclaimed: "What does this mean? This door is open!"

Kasperle was terribly frightened. He was just about to hide in a corner, when Frau Emma entered the pantry; and losing his balance he fell right into the whipped cream, kerplash! It splashed

up high and Frau Emma, who saw only something floundering and sprawling, took Kasperle for a cat. She rushed out of the pantry screaming and crying for help.

Kasperle got out of the tub quicker than he fell in, and he popped out of the room in a jiffy. But Frau Emma saw him and noticed too that the two-legged animal was no cat. She tried to grab him; but, since he was covered from head to foot with whipped cream, he slipped out of her hands. Doors opened, people came, and Kasperle, spying a large pillar, slid behind it. Here he could hear Frau Emma complaining, and maids and servants scolding; but suddenly someone shouted: "Guests are arriving again."

Then everyone ran to see the guests and Kasperle crept out from his hiding place. His hunger was satisfied and now he would have liked to sleep more than anything else, but he didn't dare ask anyone where the room was that he was to have. Looking around, he discovered a narrow staircase that led upstairs. Ah, perhaps it was quieter up there and he might find a little nook to rest in. Upstairs, he came to a hallway with many doors opening into it. The little rogue crept along the wall, for he didn't feel quite at ease. The narrow hall led to a larger one, and here there was door after door. They were all white with gold ornamentation and looked very gorgeous. One of these doors stood slightly ajar, and inquisitive Kasperle couldn't resist, he had to peek in. What a beautiful room he saw! Even the walls were covered with silk and against one wall there was a wide gilt bed. There

was no one in the room, and the bed looked mighty inviting. One ought to sleep well in that!

He slipped quietly into the room and—one, two, three—he landed in the beautiful bed. The covers were all silk and Kasperle rolled himself up in them like a porcupine. Ah, here one slept better than in Farmer Strohkopf's lodgings! However in Protzendorf no one would have disturbed him till morning. Here, however! Kasperle sat upright in terror, many voices resounded outside the door and he became frightened. With one bound he jumped out of the bed, smoothed it over hurriedly, and then crept underneath in a jiffy.

And it was high time; for immediately the door opened and an elderly gentleman, accompanied by several servants, entered. They talked about all sorts of things, things that Kasperle didn't quite understand, and then the gentleman stepped up to the bed and said with a sigh: "I am very tired to-day. I only wish the day was over!" With these words he stroked the silk pillows slightly for he wondered why they were not lying straight. "What in the world is this?" he suddenly exclaimed in astonishment. The Duke, for he was the elderly gentleman, drew back his hand in amazement. He examined it, shook his head, and shouted indignantly: "Frederick in my bed there is some—whipped cream!"

"Whipped cream!" Frederick opened his mouth wide in astonishment as he hastened near. He too ran his hand over the covers, licked off his fingers a little, and exclaimed dumfounded:



"In my bed there is some—whipped cream."

"Whipped cream!" Then, rushing to the bell, he rang it furiously. In a few moments a chamberlain appeared. He bowed three times, and asked the Duke three times what he wanted.

The latter pointed to the bed and said: "What is that? Just run your hand over it!"

The chamberlain ran his hand over the bed in astonishment, shrank back in surprise, ran his hand over it again, licked his fingers a little bit, and likewise exclaimed: "Whipped cream!"

The Duke kept shaking his head in astonishment over the curious affair. And as he shook his head, he happened to glance into the large mirror that hung directly opposite the bed. He saw the whole bed reflected in it, and suddenly he screamed aloud as he sank into his chair: "There—there—there!" Shouting and trembling, he pointed under the bed, and then to the mirror; for in this he saw Kasperle whose curiosity had led him to project his long nose just a little too far.

"Someone is hiding under the bed," the head steward was the first to exclaim. Then two servants crept underneath, and no matter how little Kasperle tried to make himself, he was caught nevertheless. They pulled him out by the legs, and both shouted angrily: "He is actually stuck, moreover he is covered with whipped cream from head to foot."

"Oh!" said the Duke in amazement as Kasperle stood there before him. Judging from his nose, he had thought it was a full-grown robber hiding under the bed.

"Oh!" said the Count angrily. "He is the one my cousin Von

Singerlingen brought with him, and the one who has done nothing but get into mischief. He deserves a beating!"

"Yes, and he ought to be locked up!" said the head steward, and the Duke nodded approval. But because he was very tired he whispered: "Postpone the beating till to-morrow."

"Yes, to-morrow he shall have the beating, for the present I shall have him locked up in the cellar," said the Count sternly.

Things looked bad for Kasperle, pretty bad, indeed. Perhaps it would be best to beg fervently for mercy right now, perhaps the Duke might pardon him after all. It was a lucky thing that he was slippery, for he succeeded in escaping, for a moment, the hands of the servant. He made a gigantic lunge toward the Duke and screamed in a whining voice: "Please, please, please!"

But the Duke was a rather timid man. He leaned way way back in his chair, nervously, and all of a sudden over went the chair, Duke and all.

"For heaven's sake!" The Count, the steward, the servants, all ran in fright to his assistance; and then Kasperle turned a gigantic somersault over them all and away he went, slamming the door so hard in the face of the servant who tried to follow him that the latter retreated, though later he managed to reach the hall; the waiting man followed and cried loudly: "Help, help! stop him, stop him!"

Yes, but whom were all the servants, who came running, to stop, pray tell? There was no sign of Kasperle anywhere. Had the earth swallowed him up? He had vanished without a trace.

There was no Kasperle running down the long, long corridor; the doors were all locked, so he couldn't have slipped into one of the rooms. Servants were running up and down the hall, and up and down the stairs. The whole castle fell into consternation; everyone was hunting, and the guests didn't even know what they were hunting for. Then the Count summoned the royal physician, for he thought the Duke had probably broken many bones; but fortunately he hadn't broken any. Only the chair had *its* legs broken. But the Duke sighed and groaned as if he had actually been broken in two. There was frightful commotion in the whole castle. Finally, however, the Duke said he would like to eat dinner for he was very hungry. Thank goodness! They all were hungry as it had grown quite late. About this time of day, those not fortunate enough to have a castle to live in would be drinking their afternoon coffee.

The Count gave orders to all three of his night watchmen to search everywhere, and to take Kasperle prisoner if they found him. And then they ate dinner. It tasted good to everyone, and now everyone was in a happy mood once more. But nevertheless they all agreed that there was something very mysterious about that strange boy.



CHAPTER VII

Rosemary

On all sides watchmen guarded the castle and great hounds kept circling about it, but they did not find Kasperle. Where could he be? It was as if he had blown away. The servants and the maids literally hunted the whole castle through, searching even the locked chests and cupboards, but the little rascal could not be found.

Only one person in the whole castle knew where Kasperle was hiding, and that was Rosemary. She had been standing at the window when a loud noise resounded from below. In wonder she looked out. And lo and behold there was Kasperle, dangling from the branches of the ancient ivy, with which the castle wall was covered, like a ripe plum from a tree. "Why, it's the strange boy!" exclaimed Rosemary in astonishment, whereupon Kasperle came tumbling into her room, for he couldn't climb any farther. Besides, he was quite out of breath with fear and haste.

Down below, the shouting grew louder and louder, and to Rosemary's great astonishment Kasperle suddenly crept under the sofa. From there he wailed piteously: "They will hang me!"

Rosemary felt very sorry for the little rascal; she coaxed him to come out, and then she hid him in her doll room. This was a small room, furnished with all sorts of doll furniture. Kasperle just fitted in the bed belonging to Rosemary's largest doll. To be sure he had to roll up a little bit, like a porcupine, but Rosemary assured him: "That won't hurt you, and besides no one will find you here."

And indeed it never occurred to anyone in the whole castle to hunt in Rosemary's doll room. Her governess thought she had been playing with her dolls all the while, for she had kept so quiet. When Rosemary went out she carefully drew the curtains on the doll's bed together and there lay Kasperle in the white mull bed draped with light blue silk curtains. The little bed was fine and soft, only for such a restless little good-for-nothing as Kasperle it was altogether too fine and elegant.

He sighed a deep sigh when Rosemary left. He would have preferred to get up and rummage about in the dolls' room, but he was very much afraid of getting caught, so he lay there quietly.

At last Rosemary returned. She had bidden the guests good-night, and was now soon to go to bed herself. She needed a good night's rest, for the following day the wedding was to take place and she wanted to be present by all means. Quietly she pulled the curtains apart to see if the little stranger was sleeping well.

Kasperle looked at her sadly, and with a piteous sigh he muttered: "I can't lie in this bed."

"But you must stay there," whispered Rosemary anxiously. "Oh, Kasper," she complained, "what have you done! The Duke is furiously angry and already thirty huntsmen have come to guard the castle so that no one can get out. And early to-morrow everything is to be searched again. Then they will surely come in here; and if they find you, you will be put in prison."

"Ugh!" Kasperle shook himself. He had not run out into the wide, wide world to be put into prison. "I'll flee," he muttered.

"Then the dogs or the huntsmen will get you," sighed Rosemary anxiously. But suddenly her face lighted up. "I'll tell you what," she said, "I'll give you the key to the tower. There is an exit right beside the tower, and perhaps there won't be any guard just at that place. Come, they are all at the table eating now. I will hurriedly show you the way." She carefully wrapped up the piece of cake she was to have eaten herself and handed it to Kasperle. Then she ran ahead, very, very stealthily.

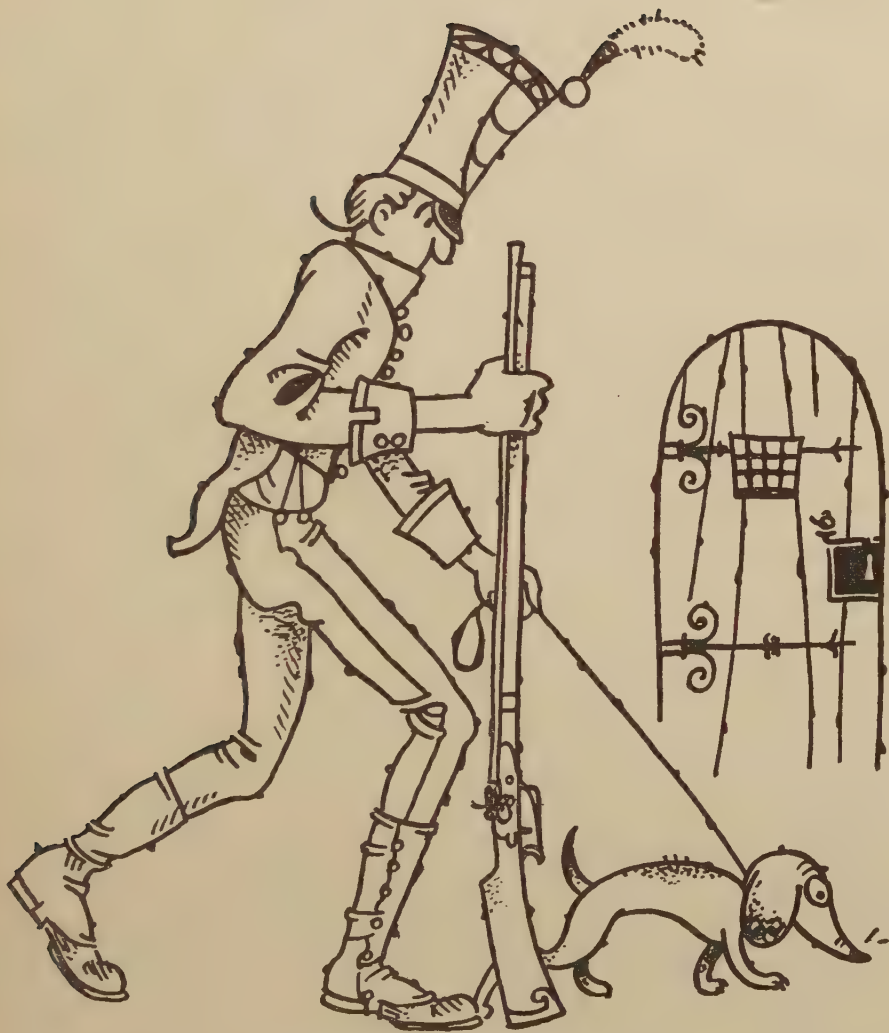
Kasperle followed her, his shoes in his hand. Rosemary descended very narrow steps, and went through a passageway at the end of which she opened a door, and both entered a round room. A table stood in the center of the room and chairs around that, and it was light enough for Kasperle to see everything. From the round room stairs led downward. Rosemary instructed Kasperle that he must descend there, unlock the door below, and then he would be at the end of the castle park and could probably escape. As she gave him these instructions, she was seized with deep pity for the poor strange lad. She couldn't see that he had

done any wrong. "You poor little Kasperle," she whispered; and glistening tears streamed down her lovely cheeks.

Just now Kasperle himself was feeling very forlorn and deserted and he began to cry terribly. Rosemary quickly held her hands over his mouth, for Kasperle had a voice that could penetrate even a thick tower wall. He quieted down immediately and looked at Rosemary in fright. But when she said: "Now I must go," the tears again began to stream from his eyes in torrents. But he was quiet, nevertheless, and promised to carry out all her instructions obediently. And then for a moment he tightly held the dainty little hand of the Countess.

Oh, how gladly he would have remained here in the beautiful castle and have become Rosemary's playmate! He tilted his head to one side and stared at Rosemary with a roguish leer. Suddenly she exclaimed: "Do you know how you look? Like—like my Kasperle doll." And then suddenly she began to be just a little bit afraid of the strange, homely lad and she said hurriedly: "I must go." She gave a parting nod and glided quietly out of the room. Kasperle heard the door close and realized he was alone once more.

He sat there sobbing quietly for a few minutes and thus forgot Rosemary's good instructions. Instead of stealthily descending the narrow steps and opening the door below he could not resist looking out of the window. It creaked and rattled terribly on being opened, however Kasperle stuck his head out and looked around. Oh, how fine and clear the air was outside! Kasperle looked up



"Sultan, be on your guard!"

toward the heavens, then to the right, and then to the left, and then down below.

"Bow-wow-wow-wow." An enormous dog stood there barking up at Kasperle. "Bow-wow-wow-wow." His barking was enough to frighten anyone.

Kasperle tried to withdraw his head quickly, but he didn't succeed very well, for the little window was narrow and Kasperle's head rather wide; and before he got it outside again, a huntsman bobbed up among the bushes.

Then there was some shouting! "He is hiding in the tower," cried the man. "Just you wait, I'll get you!" He measured the window in a glance, no, not even a small boy could climb through that. And since he had no key to the door below he ran hastily into the castle, but not without calling to his dog: "Sultan, be on your guard!"

Kasperle heard him running away and reflected a minute what to do. Then hastily grabbing Rosemary's cake from the table, he ran down the steps like lightning. "Bow-wow-wow." Sultan barked at him angrily. Kasperle, equal to the occasion, thrust the cake into the dog's huge jaws. Yum, yum! Sultan forgot to bark. Fine cake like that didn't come his way very often. He licked his chops and gulped it down. In the meantime Kasperle had reached the little door, which creaked and squeaked but finally came open. Sultan, having devoured his cake, began to recall his duty as guard. But Kasperle reached the door first and slammed it shut in his face. Once outside Kasperle fairly tumbled down the hill and landed

in a little brook. The water splashed up high as if to resent this treatment.

Up at the castle, the noise and commotion increased. Now not only Sultan barked, but all of the dogs. Voices sounded louder, calls reëchoed, and Kasperle began to tremble with fear. In terror he ran in the water for some distance till he came to a clump of bushes. Here he concealed himself. By creeping through these, he could see a wide meadow stretched out before him and in the distance the dark mountain forests. Perhaps he could hide in those. But, instead of running across the meadow, Kasperle began to turn handsprings, and he disappeared faster than dew water running down a mountain side. Here at last was the forest, and Kasperle plunged into its deep shadows.

But it was high time. At the castle they had found the tower empty and the guardsmen set up a mighty alarm. The Duke and his guests heard it; and, when the Duke heard that Kasperle had been seen, he gave orders to have him pursued. He was still furiously angry at the little fellow. To the one who should find him he offered a large reward. Then everything that had legs started to run in search of Kasperle. It was soon discovered where he had escaped, for Sultan stood barking angrily at the gate in the wall. "We'll soon have him," said the huntsmen. "Sultan will find him all right!"

But Sultan didn't find him. He halted suddenly when he came to the brook, sniffed and sniffed, but the water had washed away Kasperle's traces. Where was Kasperle?

Guardsmen, dogs, maids, servants, everyone was running around in the castle and about the castle, but they did not find Kasperle. Some declared he was still in the castle. "No, he has escaped," the guardsmen maintained. "We must search the woods." The maids thought Kasperle was a spirit, a hobgoblin, but the housekeeper assured them a spirit could not have devoured so much whipped cream. And she searched the pantries at least ten times, for she thought it most probable that Kasperle would hide there.

In the meantime Kasperle climbed the mountain which made a steep ascent heavenward. The forest was so dense here that the little rascal could easily have hidden in it. But Kasperle was still terribly afraid of the huntsmen and the dogs, so he kept mounting as fast as he could. And this was not always easy. Dry branches, tangled roots, and an occasional fallen tree made his progress so difficult that his nose was almost battered to pieces from falling on it so often. And the higher he climbed the more difficult the ascent became. The ground was strewn with bowlders, and a human boy could not have climbed as high so quickly. But Kasperle mounted higher and higher until he suddenly beheld a green mountain meadow stretched out before him.

Evening had come on, and in the dark blue sky the moon stood faint and thin. A little star twinkled too, but Kasperle did not see it. For he sank down, exhausted, at the edge of the forest, shut his eyes, and was soon asleep. The great forest trees pitied the poor lost boy. They who constantly look upward toward

the heavens have compassion for the poor little children who have sorrows on earth, and the little fellow who was sleeping there beneath them, so tired, so hounded to death, made them feel very sorry. They sang him a beautiful restful slumber song and told him stories, so that Kasperle slept better on the soft floor of the forest than in the Duke's silken bed. He didn't hear the loud shouts of the huntsmen or the barking of the dogs, who were searching for the little fugitive farther down the slope. No one ascended as far as the mountain meadow, for the way was so steep and difficult that it never occurred to them that Kasperle could have traversed it.

Kasperle kept on sleeping sweetly and soundly, while the huntsmen turned back saying he must have hidden himself in the castle. And they guarded the castle again, and the housekeeper kept her eye on the pantries. In spite of her vigilance, however, a large piece of cake was missing the following day. She said: "It was that boy who took it"; and the maids said so too. But Bertha and Doris, the two youngest, secretly smacked their lips; for they were the ones who had eaten the cake. They were the loudest, however, in accusing the strange boy.

The day following the wedding the Duke was sick from anger and fright. It is also quite probable that he had eaten too much cake. Who can tell! And the Count kept demanding: "Bring me the lad so that the Duke can punish him. The Duke shall not worry himself sick in my castle."

Little Rosemary's heart was heavy. She would have been glad

to confess everything to her parents, but did not dare. She feared the Duke might become terribly angry at her, and she knew she could not say: "I am sorry." She was too happy over Kasperle's escape for that. She went about looking so glum and so solemn and pale that her mother could not help being anxious about her. With the Duke sick and Rosemary sick it was not all pleasant in the castle these days. Good Count Singerlingen was of the opinion that things ought to cheer up a little bit. I must think up something pleasant, he reflected. So when he heard that, in the tiny village down at the foot of the castle hill, a puppet show had arrived, he sent word down for the puppet showman to come up.

"I have a surprise," said Count Singerlingen at the table. And then he told about the puppet theater.

The Duke who was sitting at the table somewhat out of sorts had to laugh. "That's a queer surprise for grown ups," he remarked. "But let the man come. A puppet show can be very funny."

So in the afternoon there was a presentation at the castle. The Kasperle man came up from the village, set up his stage, and Kasperle poked out his long nose, and— No one listened, you may be sure, to what he was about to say; for all the spectators exclaimed: "It's the strange boy! That's just the way he looked."

It is Kasper! thought Rosemary, much terrified, and suddenly she began to cry bitterly. Her sobs were so heartbreaking that the Kasperle man forgot his speeches, and the Duke his anger. He kindly asked why she was so sad, and the little girl was glad to

have a chance to tell everything; for the secret had greatly burdened her heart.

"Oh, Rosemary," exclaimed the Countess in terror, "why did you help the bad boy to escape?"

"Beg your pardon," the Kasperle man started talking from behind the stage. "That wasn't a boy at all; it was a real live Kasperle."

"Good heavens!" thundered the Duke casting a ferocious look at the Kasperle man. "What kind of nonsense are you talking? A live Kasper! I never heard of such a thing, in all my life!"

The Kasperle man, however, came quickly nearer and kept bowing lower and lower. He almost touched the ground with his nose, until finally the Duke exclaimed: "Enough, enough, now I want to know what the history of this Kasperle really is."

Then the puppet showman told about the forest cottage and about Protzendorf, and that he was going to catch Kasperle, no matter how far he had to travel to do it.

What a strange story! The Duke had him tell it three times, and even then the puppet showman had to take a solemn oath that everything he said was really true. So the stranger was a Kasper!

Little Rosemary recalled how afraid she had been of him in the tower. But now she wouldn't be afraid any more, for he was only a Kasperle. Her little heart almost broke with sorrow when she now heard the Duke say: "He must be caught! I should like to own a curiosity like that. Whoever finds him shall receive a

large reward. I can make terms with the Kasperle carver, in the forest cottage—he must give Kasperle to me. Make haste, make haste, let ten huntsmen start out with dogs at once, and let them search everywhere. I must have Kasperle!”

The puppet showman forgot that he had promised Master Friedolin that he alone should have Kasperle. He was enticed by the large reward, and he promised the Duke that he would deliver Kasperle over to him—that is, provided he could find him.

The Duke said he would put Kasperle in a golden cage, so that he couldn't get away from him again. However, the main thing was to catch him first. Down in the village word was passed from mouth to mouth: “Whoever finds the genuine Kasperle will receive a large sum of money.” At once many people started out hurriedly into the wide country to search for Kasperle. They must have thought he would be sitting in the middle of the highway and allow himself to be caught like a butterfly.

Poor little Rosemary however was lying in her bed crying bitterly. When her mother came to her once more, she found the pillow quite wet with tears. Between her sobs Rosemary told her mother how sorry she felt for poor, hunted, little Kasperle, who was to be penned up in a cage. Her mother comforted her with the thought that Kasperle was not found yet. “Perhaps he even may find his way back to the forest cottage; it seems to me that is the best home for him,” she said.

“I will pray that Kasperle finds his way home,” whispered Rosemary, folding her hands in prayer. Then she fell asleep and

dreamed that Kasperle was sitting in a golden cage, and a bird came and sang and sang; and suddenly around the cage there was a green forest and Kasperle was walking around in it contentedly. He bowed to her happily, and then he disappeared. Finally the Duke came running along and the huntsmen with many many people and they all shouted: "Where is Kasperle?" Then Rosemary had to laugh, and she laughed and laughed till she was suddenly awakened by her own laughter. Perhaps Kasperle never really will be caught, she thought, comforted.



CHAPTER VIII

A New Home

Meanwhile Kasperle lay sleeping on the mountain meadow. The little rascal heard neither the barking dogs nor the loud huzzahs; not a sound penetrated the lonely heights. And when Kasperle finally awakened, the whole meadow was bathed in sunshine; and many tender flowerets of variegated hues had burst into bloom, so that the meadow lay stretched out before him like a green silk festive garment, studded with precious stones. He rubbed his eyes in wonder. How gloriously beautiful it was up here! The tall pine forests surrounded the meadow in a semicircle and beyond them the mountain peaks rose abruptly. Over all shimmered the deep blue heaven, and the air was filled with subdued buzzing and whirring. Bees, beetles, flies, and brilliant butterflies fluttered from blossom to blossom; and high up in the sky a bird was soaring. It was an eagle, but Kasperle was not aware of the fact; and it was well, for he would have been afraid of the king of the birds. Kasperle was so absorbed in the beauty that surrounded him that he almost forgot his misery, till finally his stomach served notice that breakfast time had long since passed.

Breakfast, indeed! Where was it to be gotten? Kasperle felt in his pockets; they were empty. In vain did he recall the overflowing pantries in the castle, and the cake which Sultan had devoured. Berries, which might have helped to appease his appetite just a little, were nowhere to be found. And the perfume of the flowers hardly sufficed to satisfy the hunger of a Kasperle.

Therefore, he got up and decided to wander on. He planned to cross the mountains, for it was certain no one from the castle would follow him that far. He never dreamed how high the mountains were. So, starting out bravely, he crossed the blooming meadow and then began to climb. He had been ascending for perhaps an hour, when he came to a narrow footpath which followed along the mountain side. It was apparent that this path was not used very often. But a path usually leads somewhere, so Kasperle went tripping along in it as fast as his legs would carry him. In the meantime, his hunger had reached gigantic proportions, and he suddenly felt as if he couldn't take another step. He sat down on a stone and began to cry with grief and hunger.

Suddenly he heard a faint pealing of bells; the sound grew gradually louder and louder, and Kasperle reflected: That's the way the church bells used to sound in Waldrast on Sundays when they summoned the people to worship. Hurrah, there must be a church somewhere near here! And where there is a church, there are people.

Kasperle ran in the direction of the bells. He didn't have to go far, for just around a cliff, he spied a village nestling down

below. Houses were grouped about a large white church. How quiet and peaceful it looked! From every chimney a faint cloud of smoke ascended merrily heavenward. Kasperle perceived it was dinner time, and the bells were calling the noon hour. They sounded so alluring that he would have gladly tumbled headfirst down the mountain side, could he have feasted down there with the others. But he kept sitting quietly on the mountain, for he was afraid to associate with people. If it hadn't been for his terrible hunger! Kasperle doubled up, he was so hungry; and, with tears in his eyes, he sat gazing down into the village. How well off they all were down there! They were not so utterly deserted and lonely as he was!

Just about this time a man was climbing up the mountain from the village. And this man was Mr. Habermus, the schoolmaster. He intended to gather flowers on the mountain meadow which Kasperle had just crossed. For on it there grew rare herbs, and Mr. Habermus was well versed in botany. Few people ever came into the lonely village that bore the name Waldrast; and when there was sickness there, it was very tedious and difficult to summon a doctor. People preferred to consult their schoolmaster. He doctored them with herbs as best he could. On this bright day Mr. Habermus had hoped to fill his tin box with all sorts of herbs, but instead he chanced upon this crying Kasperle.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, when he spied the little fellow. "What in the world have we here?" He actually thought it was a mountain sprite or something of that sort, although he

didn't really believe in such things. But Kasperle did impress him as being so queer. Moreover this mountain path was seldom traveled by strangers. "Heigh ho!" he exclaimed, taking hold of Kasperle, who was still crying. "Where did you hail from? Where are you bound for? Why are you crying?"

Three questions at once, that was a good many. Kasperle related, between sobs, the same old story, that he was a poor deserted orphan boy making his way in the world.

As Mr. Habermus was a kind compassionate man, he at once felt terribly sorry for Kasperle. "Well, well," he said, "you mustn't cry so hard. There is surely a place in this great big world for a boy like you!" "Oh, but I am so hungry!" screamed Kasperle so loudly and pathetically that Mr. Habermus began to twirl his tin box around and around in fright. His wife had packed it with a generous supply of sandwiches and cookies that she had baked for Whitsunday. The schoolmaster handed him some of the bread and some of the cakes, and was about to say: "Eat," when—gobble, gobble—Kasperle stuffed the food into his huge mouth and—gulp, gulp—it was down!

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Mr. Habermus, "you certainly can eat!" He filled Kasperle's hands again and—one, two, three—all gone! There won't be enough, thought Mr. Habermus, sadly. But there was enough. Kasperle soon had all he could hold, and the schoolmaster said: "Now tell me, where did you really come from?"

That was a difficult task. Kasperle related confusedly about

Protzendorf and complained bitterly of Damian and Florian, so that good Mr. Habermus got the impression he had been a goose boy, goodness knows how long. "And did you go to school, too, as you ought?" he inquired compassionately.

"To school?" Kasperle, in wonder, opened his mouth wider than he had done before when he was hungry. For it had never occurred to him, a Kasperle, to go to school. "No," he said, as he kept shaking his head. "To school? No!"

"You mean to say, you have never been to school?" demanded Mr. Habermus, righteously indignant.

"No, never!" And Kasperle kept nodding to and fro; and Mr. Habermus kept shaking his head, too, for this was a sad story. Here he must lend a hand; the boy must attend school. It would be a pretty state of affairs, indeed, to let a youngster run around in the world without ever attending school. "That will never do," he exclaimed. "Sonny, you must go to school!"

If Mr. Habermus had exclaimed: "Kasperle, I must cut off your ears," Kasperle could not have been more frightened. For, when he lived at the forest cottage, Master Friedolin often used to threaten: "Just you wait, I'll send you to school!" And Windgus and Watergus, his friends in Protzendorf, had told him that the only nice thing about school was vacation time. And Kasperle was much more inclined to believe these two drones than Mr. Habermus, who now said: "A real boy ought not only to go to school, but he ought to enjoy it; for school is wonderfully nice!" And then, placing his finger on the side of his nose, Mr. Habermus

began to reflect how he might help Kasperle. And after he had thought awhile, he said: "My son, I am going to take you to Waldrast with me. We have only two children, so there is room in the schoolmaster's house. You can help my wife in the kitchen, and help me gather herbs. But when I conduct school you must attend. Come along now, we'll go home! I won't hunt herbs to-day. Won't my wife open her eyes, though, when she sees the guest I'm bringing!"

Kasperle felt as if a cyclone had struck him. Now, all of a sudden, he, the real, genuine Kasperle, was to go to school! How would it seem? Quite dazed, he followed on behind the schoolmaster who descended the zigzag path into the valley. Thus they entered the village, and at the first house they came to there sat several boys and girls under a large fir tree. They were surprised at the sight of the strange-looking boy who, with bowed head, came trudging on behind their schoolmaster. Immediately they were following on behind, too, in order to get a better look at Kasperle. This staring annoyed Kasperle; he turned around as quick as a flash and made his robber-chieftain face.

"Oh, oh, oh!" The girls screamed loudly, the boys laughed, but Mr. Habermus turned around provoked. "What does this noise mean?" he asked.

"Why, that boy, there, made such a comical face!" And every little index finger stretched forth and pointed at Kasperle, accusingly.

Then Mr. Habermus did get angry, in earnest. "Shame on

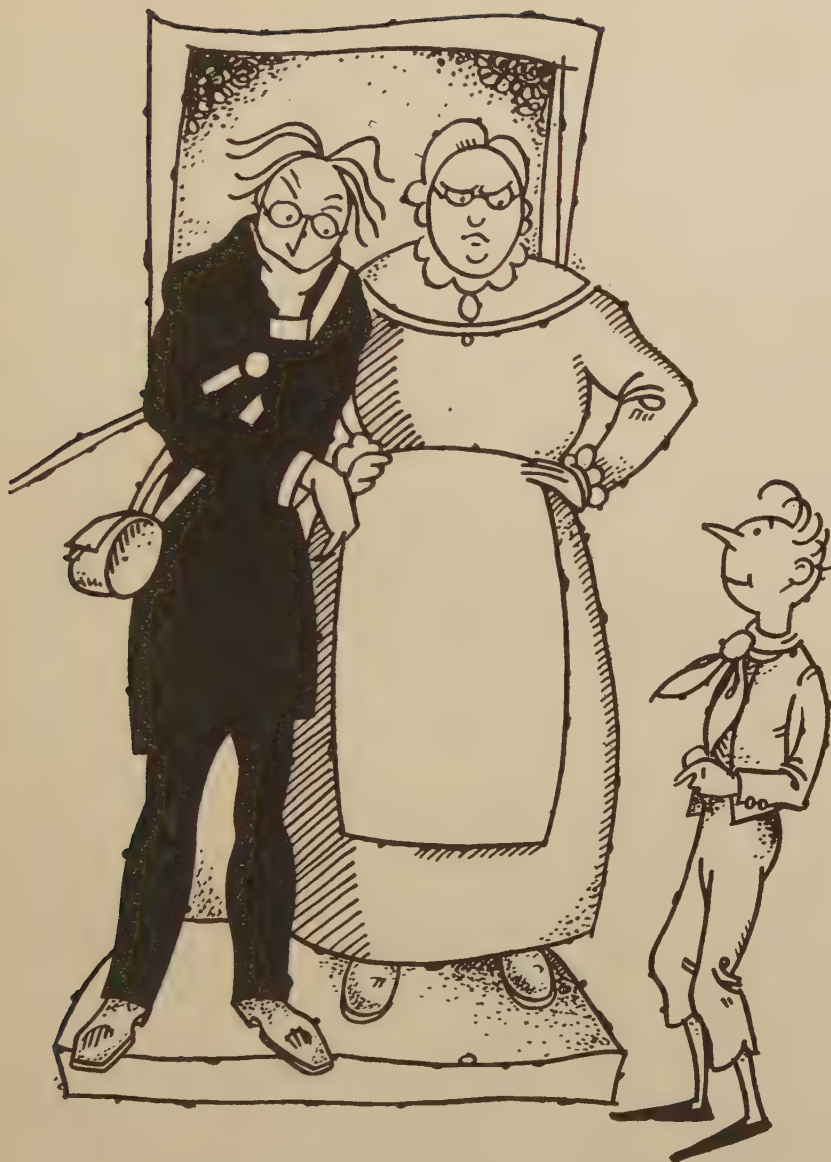
you!" he exclaimed. "He's not to blame for his large nose! He's a poor orphan boy who has had a hard time in the world. Come, Kasper, they'll make up with you at school to-morrow!" And again Mr. Habermus started on ahead, Kasperle following.

The latter had scarcely taken three steps before he turned around and made his most ridiculous Kasperle face. The children screamed with delight and the schoolmaster turned around again. "Children, why all this noise?" he demanded sternly.

And again little index fingers were pointing and voices shouting in unison: "Why, that little fellow there is making such a funny face!"

"Kasper!" Mr. Habermus eyed his little charge suspiciously; but there he stood, looking as innocent as a lamb. "Stupid, nonsense!" muttered the schoolmaster and went on his way; for the schoolmaster's house was located at the farther end of the village. Tramp, tramp, Kasperle followed him. Pretty soon a flock of geese came waddling along and Kasperle made his robber face at them. Then there *was* some cackling and screaming. The geese scattered here and there in fright, the children laughed, and Mr. Habermus turned around again, greatly vexed; but as Kasperle was walking humbly behind him with bowed head, he scolded the children and the geese. "Go home," he commanded the children, "and leave Kasperle in peace!" Then he took Kasperle by the hand and led him home; for after all, he didn't quite fully trust the little rascal.

The schoolmaster's wife was very much astonished when she



"He looks like a Kasperle at a fair!"

saw her husband returning so early and bringing such a strange-looking creature with him. "Why," she exclaimed, "what kind of a hobgoblin are you bringing home with you? He looks like a Kasperle at a fair!"

Mr. Habermus felt very much hurt; and, as he began to explain to his dear wife how he had come upon Kasperle, this little rogue stood by with such a sad expression upon his face that the wife, who was naturally very kind-hearted, began to feel very sorry for him. And, taking him gently by the hand, she led him into the house.

Inside, you may be sure, there was not only some loud howling but also some very wicked glances at the sight of Kasperle. For the howling, Lenchen and Lorchen Habermus were responsible. They were three and four years old, and so a trifle silly. However, they stopped crying almost immediately, when Kasperle put on a happy expression. In fact they laughed at him in delight. But Aunt Mummeline didn't join in the laughter. It was she who had darted the ugly glances at him. Her face was like a thundercloud. She didn't like the house guest, the useless eater. In fact, not a single thing about his whole make-up pleased her. "He looks like a scarecrow," she declared, as she surveyed the little fellow from the corner of her eyes.

Nor did Kasperle like Aunt Mummeline very well. He saw, at once, that she was not a good friend of his. Therefore, at the supper table, when she looked daggers at him, he made his robber

face at her, as quick as a flash. "Oh, look at the rascal!" screamed Aunt Mummeline. "He's enough to frighten anyone!"

But since Kasperle, the little rogue, had taken care that no one else should see his robber face and had quickly resumed his innocent expression, the teacher's wife grew impatient. "Auntie, don't be so cross, the little fellow didn't do anything!"

"Oh!" Aunt Mummeline fell from her chair in terror. "Now—just now—he looked the same way again!" she complained. "Oh, oh, we'll have trouble with him yet."

Good Mr. Habermus became somewhat suspicious. He recalled how the children had shouted and laughed as he trudged through the village with Kasperle; and, he, too, had noticed a spark of roguishness gleaming and glistening in Kasperle's eyes. So after Aunt Mummeline had wailed, "Oh!" and, "Oh!" again and again, he said sternly: "That'll do for you, Kasper. Go to bed. Let him get a good night's rest, for to-morrow school begins, and he must study diligently. And there's going to be no nonsense," he added threateningly.

Why, I never indulge in nonsense! thought Kasperle as he stretched himself out in bed. I? Why never! Then he lay awake listening and, after awhile, he heard Aunt Mummeline coming into her room. It was right beside his. Kasperle hurriedly jumped up on the window sill, took a long stick that was standing in the corner; and bang, bang he tapped on Aunt Mummeline's window. She was about to take off her cap; but in fright she toppled

right over into the wash basin—cap and all. She panted and sighed and was sure there was a ghost outside, in front of her window. But suddenly, collecting her wits, she seized her lamp and rushed over to Kasperle's room. There lay Kasperle, quietly and peacefully in his feather bed, with every appearance of being sound asleep. Aunt Mummeline shook her head. It must have been a ghost and not the strange boy. "Hm, hm," she muttered as she went out of the door. She turned around once more and—"Oh!" she screamed and, in her confusion, fell over her slippers. The light fell out of her hands, she bumped into her door, and couldn't find her way back into her room. The schoolmaster and his wife came running, terror-stricken. "What does all this noise mean?" they demanded. "There—there lies a ghost," wailed Aunt Mummeline, pointing toward Kasperle's room. "It's a ghost!"

"Nonsense!" Mr. Habermus opened the door and looked in. There lay Kasperle in bed, quietly and peacefully; he was asleep, even snoring a little. "What ails Aunt Mummeline!" muttered Mr. Habermus angrily as he carefully closed the door of Kasperle's room. But, alas, only Aunt Mummeline had gotten a glimpse of his ugly robber face! And she could not sleep a wink during the whole night because of this uncanny little guest.



CHAPTER IX

Kasperle at School

The next day Kasperle went to school for the first time. He awoke in such a good mood and sat so quietly at the breakfast table, that even Aunt Mummeline had to confess that he wasn't so bad, after all. Then Kasperle, with his hand in that of Mr. Habermus and with halting steps, was led into the schoolroom, and the schoolmaster introduced him by saying: "I have brought you a new school companion."

A loud peal of laughter arose. Mr. Habermus was utterly dumfounded; ordinarily his pupils didn't act like that. He stared at them, he stared at Kasperle; the latter was standing quietly beside him, wearing a blank expression. "Now come to order!" commanded Mr. Habermus. "Kasper, wish them all good-morning."

"Good-morning!" bawled Kasperle, and immediately a general explosion of jubilant laughter broke forth. Boys and girls, large and small, all joined in, some squealing like little pigs, others bellowing like bears. And they just couldn't stop. And Kasperle laughed too. He opened his mouth wide enough for a coach and four to drive in.

Mr. Habermus stood there completely puzzled. He could not quite make out whether Kasperle laughed because the children did or whether they were laughing at Kasperle. "But children, children!" shouted the schoolmaster in a threatening tone, never suspecting that, as a matter of course, children always had to laugh at a real Kasperle whether they wanted to or not. And Mr. Habermus felt very queer. He tried to scold severely but couldn't. The laughter was contagious. Whenever he saw Kasperle laughing, he himself began to smile and had to look away. Finally, he said: "Take this seat up in front"; and Kasperle went obediently to the seat assigned him, that being where none of the children could get a front view of him.

Mr. Habermus heaved a sigh of relief. Quiet was restored at last and he was able to begin the school work. First, the children sang a song and Kasperle listened very thoughtfully; that pleased him first-rate. After that the small children were asked to write, and the older ones to relate Bible stories. Mr. Habermus stepped up to Kasperle and showed him how to write—up, down; Kasperle scrawled hurriedly all over his slate, and, moreover, he used his left hand.

"What, left-handed!" exclaimed Mr. Habermus. "Use your right hand!"

"He's using his left one again!" suddenly called out some one in the rear. It was fat little Jacob who had spoken, and immediately a few others chimed in and shouted: "He always uses his left."

"You should use your right hand, Kasper!" warned Mr. Habermus. Kasperle grinned and turned himself about completely, and immediately the whole class began to laugh again. Mr. Habermus got angry. "Kasper!" he shouted. "Don't you know the difference between right and left?" "No," said Kasperle. And he really didn't know. In his sleep he had forgotten many things, among them this; and the folk in the forest cottage hadn't taught him, again. Good heavens! Mr. Habermus sighed. The children laughed, and Kasperle laughed too. Then the schoolroom grew noisier than ever before; the teacher tried to get angry, but couldn't. "Sit still, Kasper," he commanded, "and pay attention!" Then Kasperle sat as stiff as a poker, his mouth gaping wide as the heavens. Mr. Habermus explained and asked questions; the children raised their hands and answered. This procedure pleased Kasperle immensely. All of a sudden he raised his hands both at once. "Pray tell, what do you know?" asked the teacher. He had just asked for the names of the twelve disciples, and nodded at Kasperle, who cried out loudly: "Windgus!"

"Wha-a-a-t?" Mr. Habermus thought his ears had deceived him, the children roared again; and Kasperle looked about beaming and bellowed loudly: "Sure, he's a disciple of Watergus."

"Oh, what a dunce!" Mr. Habermus only thought it. He would have liked to shout it. Finally he did say sternly: "Quiet now, and you, Kasperle, don't you raise your hand again, pay attention!"

Things quieted down once more, the questioning continued, the children were discreet and raised their hands only so high. Again Kasperle found this very amusing, and he would gladly have followed suit; but he was not to raise his hands. "But why not his legs?" Perhaps that would do! And presto! Kasperle's legs were suddenly dangling in mid air.

Nothing like that had ever happened before. The whole class broke out in riotous laughter, and the teacher, who was ordinarily so patient, became terribly angry. Biff! Bang! he seized Kasperle and set him down in his seat rather harshly; it creaked as was to have been expected, and Kasperle looked at it frightened and bewildered. He had not intended to do anything naughty; and it isn't naughty for a Kasperle to stick his feet up in the air. There he sat, rigid and dazed; the room grew quiet again, and the teaching was resumed.

But only a few moments had elapsed before a shrill little voice piped up: "He's crying." It was little Barbara who had called out; and hastily all eyes were staring at Kasperle, for only he could be meant. To be sure Kasperle was crying; and such crying! The tears rolled down his cheeks in streams, and suddenly he began to scream, so that one would think no less than six boys were crying at once. It sounded so pathetic that soon a few girls began to cry. Then good Mr. Habermus had to comfort them. He said to Kasperle: "Be quiet, I'm not angry any more! If you keep on crying in that fashion, the whole room will be flooded."

Dried were Kasperle's tears, and he was soon wearing his best Sunday-go-to-meeting smile; he grinned, looked to the right and looked to the left, and then looked behind him. And immediately the whole class broke out again in jubilant laughter.

Things were desperate this day. For the first time Mr. Habermus did not finish with his classes. The cold fact was—and he admitted it—that no one really intended to be unruly, and no one meant to vex him. It seemed as if everything were bewitched.

"Let's sing," he said finally. He thought that would be the best way to make them forget their laughter; and all clapped their books shut, contented, for they all liked to sing. "The first song will be 'May Has Come,' " said Mr. Habermus. "Do you know that song, Kasperle?"

"No," shouted Kasperle, gleefully.

"We'll recite it for him," a few called out.

"Repeat the song first," suggested Mr. Habermus.

This the children did; and now something wonderful happened. Kasperle stood right up and repeated the whole song. All were astounded. The teacher thought, of course, that the rogue had known it before, so he quickly recited several other stanzas and Kasperle repeated those likewise. Mr. Habermus looked at the awful scribbling the boy had done on his slate, and he was very much perplexed. At first he thought Kasperle was terribly stupid, but now he found him by no means so limited.

Whoever could commit to memory as readily as that was

sure to make progress, he felt. He nodded at Kasperle approvingly; then he took his fiddle, and the singing was about to start.

But Kasperles can't sing; they only bellow. And Kasperle bellowed in the shrillest of tones, and the singing turned abruptly into laughter.

"Kasper, keep quiet!" shouted Mr. Habermus. "You'll never learn how to sing."

Great Scott, Liebetraut had always told him the same thing! Kasperle kept quiet but was very sad, for he would have loved to sing with the others; but when he sat there, listening so thoughtfully and innocently, one would never have thought him capable of cutting up the slightest caper.

Once more Mr. Habermus reflected. "He isn't bad; on the contrary, he's really a lovable, happy chap. I'm going to be patient with him." Nevertheless to-day he was glad when the school was dismissed, although this was the very day the pupils would have been glad to stay. They left their desks very reluctantly; and, inasmuch as their teacher did not wait, as he usually did, until they were all out, but instead went out first, it so happened that every last one of them forgot to go home.

Mr. Habermus had been sitting quietly in his room for a little while, classifying plants, when his wife came in and informed him that there was a terrible noise in the schoolroom, and, by way of inquiry, added: "The children have gone home, haven't they?"



Kasperle was sitting on the teacher's desk.

The schoolmaster ran over hurriedly. Even from the outside he could hear the children laughing; and when he thrust open the door, he saw Kasperle sitting on the teacher's desk. One leg was dangling over the side and the other was tucked under him; and, sitting thus, he was relating the story of how Damian had fallen into the water.

The children were standing around the desk as if it were a booth at a fair, and Kasperle was shouting as they do at fairs. No one saw or heard the teacher coming. Kasperle saw only the children; and, again and again, they burst out laughing. How funny Kasperle did look, and what queer grimaces he could make!

What a boy! Mr. Habermus had to restrain himself to keep from laughing too. He looked on quietly for a few minutes then he shouted above the din and roar: "Will you please go home!"

How terrified they all were! Kasperle slid down from the desk like lightning, and the boys and girls stood about confused and awe-stricken. They really didn't quite know where they were. They had seen only Kasperle, their minds had centered on him alone. But Mr. Habermus was really not angry; only a little troubled. To think I've brought that little fool into my home! What will become of him! He beckoned to the children and said finally: "Now do go home!"

In a twinkling the schoolroom was empty. They were all seized with such a sudden desire to get home that they nearly fell over one another in the attempt. Outside a few peasants were looking

on wonderingly, and they remarked to one another: "Something must have been going on over there," and, "How late school is out! Perhaps they all had to stay after school."

The children all ran home as quickly as possible, and the majority of them no sooner reached their door steps than they began telling about their wonderful new schoolmate. Meantime, Mr. Habermus brought him out from under the desk, stood him up before him, and said sternly, but not angrily: "Kasper, what a good-for-nothing rogue you are!"

Kasperle looked up at the teacher sadly. "I only did what all Kasperles do!" he answered mournfully.

"Yes, but you are—" Mr. Habermus stopped short; he was about to say,—"not a Kasper," when he looked at his little charge and the terrible thought occurred to him: He does really look like Kasperle. But at this juncture Kasperle put his hand into that of his master so beseechingly that all his anger vanished. "Well, come along, you little rascal!" he said. "But you're not to cut up any more capers on the teacher's desk."

"No," promised Kasperle faithfully; and then taking the new slate, which the teacher had given him, under his arm, he shuffled out, following Mr. Habermus contentedly. He shuffled into the living room and, unintentionally, bumped into Aunt Mummeline. She just happened to be carrying a pan of milk; and presently, there lay aunt, milk, Kasperle, and slate, all on the floor. There was general tumult. "He did it on purpose!"

croaked the aunt as she scrambled up out of the sea of milk.

"Oh, now he's looking at me that way again."

"He was not to blame," said the teacher's wife. "I saw the whole affair. He came through the door a trifle hurriedly, that's all."

"He did it on purpose. Oh, that terrible face!" Aunt Mummeline got up angry and in a rage, and seated herself at the table. Kasperle didn't dare look up, neither did he make his robber face, for he was afraid of Aunt Mummeline.

After dinner the teacher had a quiet hour, and Lenchen and Lorchen had to take naps, although they insisted vehemently that they wanted to play with Kasperle. To the latter, the teacher's wife said: "Go and romp around out of doors, but don't make any noise near the schoolhouse!" The good-hearted woman thought to herself: He ought to be allowed to play some of the time, and here indoors Aunt Mummeline might scold about it.

Kasperle burst out gleefully, but he was hardly out of doors before a few boys got hold of him. "Come with us, you must cut up some capers for us," they begged.

"Not here," said Kasperle regretfully. "I'm not to make any noise."

"Come, we'll go over to Lappenmeyer's old barn; no one will see us there," suggested Slim Blasi. The others agreed, and so they marched toward the old barn; and the troop was like an avalanche. It grew and grew on the way. Boys and girls kept

joining, and finally they all disappeared into Lappenmeyer's old barn. It was located to one side of the village, in the middle of a field.

On this afternoon, all the people in Waldrast kept wondering. A group of women said to each other: "Why in the world aren't the children going to school? Where can they be?"

"Yes, where can they be?" asked the miller's wife, who overheard them.

Then Mr. Habermus came out of the schoolhouse and inquired: "Where under the sun are the children?" His dear wife walked beside him, and kept ringing the school bell as she went along. It seemed to call out in angry, brazen tones: "School's begun, school's begun!" But no one paid any attention: not a single foot patter was heard in response. Everything was quiet. But more and more of the parents kept running somewhere, but where no one knew.

"They have perhaps gone to the woods," ventured Mrs. Veronica Lappenmeyer.

"But it's school time!" shouted Mr. Habermus, enraged. One could get to the woods very easily from Waldrast, for it extended from the village far far into the valley for many miles.

Meantime a farmer lad, driving a hay wagon, came passing by. He called out: "Mrs. Lappenmeyer, what's going on in your barn in the meadow? There's terrible screaming over there."

It's the children with Kasper, Mr. Habermus thought to himself. So he started running and the villagers followed, and all

thronged around him as he thrust open the barn door. Lo and behold, there they were. Kasperle was sitting high up among the rafters and below stood the boys and girls laughing and looking up at their new companion, who was doing trapeze stunts and talking the most ridiculous nonsense.

“Ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling!” The teacher’s wife had come running with the school bell, and the laughter and shouting of the children was silenced by the familiar sound. All were frightened, all looked about confusedly. Was it really time to go to school?

“Ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling!” The sound of the bell again fell upon their ears. “Yes,” they said, “we must go to school!” And then they ran past the grown ups, nearly ran over their teacher, and in their haste and zeal they were oblivious to everything. Kasperle suddenly leaped down from his high perch, describing in the act a wide semicircle, and he, too, was oblivious to everything; he hastened after the others, as if his life depended upon their companionship, and in a twinkling the barn was empty.

The parents looked at each other completely dumfounded. “The children act possessed!” exclaimed the miller’s wife; and the others agreed with her; but Mr. Habermus, depressed, turned back toward the schoolhouse. Kasper was to blame for this—he alone. What a bad boy he was! He can’t come to school any more, he thought to himself, as he entered the schoolroom. They were all sitting at their desks, well behaved; to the right, the

older, to the left, the younger, pupils; and Kasperle again sitting in the foremost desk. His face was beaming and he looked so innocent that one who did not know him would have considered him incapable of the least bit of nonsense.

But Mr. Habermus went to his desk, his brow furrowed with wrinkles, and said sternly: "You have all come too late, therefore you must all stay after school." At that all the boys and girls, blondes and brunettes, drooped their heads conscience-stricken; only Kasperle appeared very much astonished, and he cried out in a loud voice: "Why, the bell has just rung!"

"Keep quiet, and leave the school at once," said Mr. Habermus sternly. "You are to blame for everything. March out! Don't dare come to school again, or I'll send you away."

For a moment, a deep, ominous silence hushed the school-room. Kasperle himself sat there completely stunned; he was unconscious of any guilt. Then suddenly there was sobbing and heart-rending, piteous wailing, such as Mr. Habermus had never heard before. Not only the girls, but even the boys cried, and implored the schoolmaster to let Kasper stay in school, because he was not guilty of anything.

The teacher looked at his pupils, in blank amazement, and their pleading grew louder and more insistent; and the more they begged the more Kasperle screamed. "One would think he had bewitched the children," muttered Mr. Habermus to himself. "And me, too," he added, as he looked at Kasperle and again felt

very sorry for the poor little fellow. Angry? No, he was no longer angry with him.

"Well, then," he said finally, "he may stay, since you all beg so hard. Nor will you have to stay after school, but you will have to do a piece of work—some writing—as a punishment; and see to it that you do it well! And now in heaven's name, come to order! Kasper, what in the world is the matter now?"

Kasperle had slid down under his desk, and from that retreat, he howled forth: "I can't wr-i-i-i-te, I can't wri-i-i-te."

"Stupid boy," mumbled Mr. Habermus, "of course you don't have to write; all you need to do is to make marks—and now, for goodness' sake, be still or——"

Before the teacher finished speaking, Kasperle was again at his desk; and there he sat with the most contented look. It was obvious from his very expression that school was a source of great amusement to him. He would give downright stupid answers, and again and again the school would break out in boisterous laughter. Mr. Habermus wanted to scold but couldn't; for, in reality, Kasperle didn't do anything bad. The bell rang and school was dismissed. Usually, nearly all the children gave a sigh of relief and were glad to get out, but to-day even the laziest drones begged: "Oh, please, please let us stay; it's so wonderfully nice at school."

And the good teacher granted their request. He told them all about flowers and trees, about rocks and mountains, about dainty

butterflies and clumsy beetles; they listened quietly, but Kasperle was the most attentive of all, and was the first to protest with: "What, so soon?" when Mr. Habermus said: "Now you've had enough. Go home, don't be noisy, and don't forget your lessons!"

Then the children of Waldrast left the schoolhouse and, in spite of their punishment, they never went home so happy. In the evening the parents were nearly driven to distraction, for the children kept up a constant chatter about their wonderful new schoolmate.

CHAPTER X

A New Danger

On this particular evening Kasperle went to bed, at peace with all the world. No sooner did his weary head strike the pillow than—presto!—he was fast asleep. But Mr. Habermus, the good schoolmaster of Waldrast, was filled with anxiety, and he said to his wife: “I’m afraid we shall have a great deal of trouble and worry on account of this strange boy. If only I had never brought him home with me!”

But his wife replied cheerfully: “Don’t worry, husband. After all, Kasperle is a dear little fellow and, in time, he may turn out to be a right good pupil.”

On the following day, however, it didn’t look as if this would be the case. Scarcely had Kasperle set foot in the schoolroom before the turmoil began. A general shout went up: “Cut up some capers for us, please, please, please!”

But Kasperle remembered the teacher’s command not to cut up capers on the teacher’s desk; so—one, two, three—he nimbly leaped up on top of the tall brown bookcase. “Hurrray!” shouted the boys while the girls stood gaping in wonder. Jiminy crickets,

no one had ever gotten up there at that speed before. What fun it was! Mr. Habermus could hear the screaming from his house, and he ran over hurriedly before Aunt Mummeline had rung the bell. Thrusting open the door he exclaimed: "What in the world does all this noise mean!"

Bang! Kasperle fell off the bookcase in fright. He landed on top of a table and right on top of Heine Fistelmeyer's new slate, which resented this treatment by breaking into a thousand pieces. Kasperle's legs floundered around in mid air, till they finally struck Fritzie Schrump's nose, and after that an inkwell. The latter came tumbling down in a wide semicircle, and caused loud wailing on the girls' side of the room. Five brand clean aprons were spattered with huge black ink spots. Their owners cried, and their friends kept them company by crying too; Heine Fistelmeyer cried, Fritzie Schrump cried, Kasperle cried; others laughed and shouted. In short, it sounded as though a pack of demons had been turned loose.

Now the teacher who was usually so patient did lose his temper. Whack, whack, whack—the blows resounded, Kasperle getting his share, as well as those who screamed the loudest; and soon they all observed that their teacher wasn't going to stand any nonsense to-day. After a bit, most of the pupils quieted down; only the girls who had gotten spots on their aprons kept sobbing quietly; but Kasperle howled. Good heavens, how he could scream! Even the five girls finally quieted down; everyone stared at howling Kasperle, but gradually they all began to feel very,

very sorry for the little rascal. Mr. Habermus seized him by the collar and stood him in the corner. "There now," he said sternly; "stay there till you get your senses."

Good heavens, how Kasperle did howl! On the girls' side of the room, a faint sobbing was heard; then one after another began to cry; then, sobs on the boys' side; first the little boys started, then the large boys joined in, so that in a few minutes the whole schoolroom was crying and sobbing with Kasperle. Mr. Habermus shook his head in bewilderment. He had never had such a thing happen to him before: to have all cry, just because one pupil had been punished. He tried to be stern and to pretend not to take notice; but, curiously enough, Kasperle's crying and the mournful echo moved him very much, too, so that he finally said, in a kindly tone: "Now, children, do stop, and Kasperle, you come back to your seat. Now, let us have order!"

Kasperle hurriedly dried his tears; and, as he dashed out of his corner, all of the children suddenly began to laugh; even Mr. Habermus smiled a little. But he sighed, too, as he thought: What else under the sun is going to happen to-day!

Now Kasperle really meant to be good, and he was. But he kept on giving the most stupid answers. Merely to open his mouth was a signal for the children to laugh, and the schoolroom soon grew noisy and restless again. After school, however, the streets resounded with the riotous shouts of the children. And among the mothers there were several who said: "The schoolmaster ought

not to have taken that boy; he's a bad one, a mischievous good-for-nothing!"

You see, Aunt Mummeline had gone around in the village, telling how terrible the schoolmaster's little house guest was. In fact, she didn't say a single nice thing about him. Many believed everything she said, some only half. But as a result the grown ups all eyed Kasperle suspiciously.

Presently all the children in Waldrast began cutting up capers. To be sure, they had indulged in all sorts of monkeyshines before this; but such roughneck actions and such pulling of faces had never been the fashion before. For example, Fritzie Schrump tilted back in his chair at the table, flourished his feet around in the air, and fell over backward. His mother thought he had stomach ache; but his father gave him a smart application in the rear, which made him forget his nonsense. In the evening Mrs. Bimmelman, the next-door neighbor, hastened over to beg Mrs. Schrump to come at once, for her Peter was seized with cramps and making such terrible faces. Out on the street they met Fistemeyer's old aunt, Katrina. She complained that Heine had gone crazy, and she was going to the schoolmaster's to get some medicine. "A good sound whipping," exclaimed Father Schrump, "is the best treatment!"

And, indeed, the remedy of Father Schrump proved most efficacious in those days. Soon the parents in Waldrast discovered that their boys and girls, but especially the bad boys, were trying to imitate the schoolmaster's adopted youngster.

This was the cause of much bitter feeling and resentment in the village, and Mr. Habermus was made the target for much unkind criticism. Aunt Mummeline even heaped coals on the fire. There was daily discord in the teacher's home, Kasperle being guilty of this, that, and the other thing, at least according to Aunt Mummeline. The truth, however, was that Kasperle tried very hard to be a good boy, for he liked Waldrast very much. He was fond of school, and it made him especially happy to have playmates. As far as the accusations of Aunt Mummeline were concerned, he only expressed surprise at them. In his heart of hearts, however, he was tickled to pieces whenever she stumbled over the scrubbing pail, or whenever the chickens were cackling around in her room—he, of course, having chased them in there. Moreover, he didn't see why she needed to scream bloody murder just because six fat toads were sitting on her bed, or because all sorts of animals, beetles, and thousand-legged bugs were squirming around in her knitting basket; or even if an angleworm lay curled in her coffee cup. It was only meant in fun! And, moreover, she didn't need to be so afraid of his robber face. Thus, at least, thought Kasperle; and his friends thought so too.

But Aunt Mummeline was continually shrieking or screaming. Mr. Habermus would scold, and Mrs. Habermus would scold; but in reality they both liked the worthless little rascal. The schoolmaster didn't have the heart to say: "Kasper, go out into the world again." He felt too sorry for him, in his forlorn condition, for that.

So day after day passed by, and Kasperle remained in Waldrast. The village boys daily improved in the art of cutting up capers. But the children nearly plagued the life out of good Mr. Habermus, who bore it all patiently, even when he had, in addition, Aunt Mummeline's scolding to listen to all day. You may be very sure, therefore, that he was happy when she announced one day: "To-morrow, I am going to the city."

There was always much ado in Waldrast whenever any one went to the city. For it took many hours to descend the mountain, and then there was the long, long climb back up again. Therefore when any one said: "I am going to the city," the neighbors would come with all sorts of requests and demands to buy this, that, and the other thing for them. They would always be sure to add: "Don't fail to find out what's going on in the world!" In those days letter carriers didn't visit remote villages daily, and in Waldrast mail was delivered, at most, only once a year. So that afternoon many neighbors called. One wanted spices, another needles, a third a copper kettle; and so it continued, until, at last, Aunt Mummeline had a long list of errands written down.

"That will be too much for you to carry," said the teacher's wife. "You'll break your back. Better take Kasperle along to help you."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Aunt Mummeline, "Imagine me traveling with that boy! I'd die of anger on the way; I declare I would! Just let Kasperle keep away from me!" So Aunt Mummeline got her basket all ready and Kasperle stayed at home, for

which he was mighty thankful, you may be sure. This was bad enough; when he heard her getting up bright and early the next morning, he watched her contentedly from his window and stuck up his nose at her. When she turned around again, he made the worst robber face he possibly could.

Gee, but she was frightened! She ran so fast she almost rolled down the mountain with her basket, and not until Waldrast lay some distance behind her did she dare to breathe freely again. "Just you wait!" She shook her fist, threateningly, in the direction of the schoolmaster's house. As she trudged down the mountain she kept thinking to herself: If only I could drive that Kasperle out of Waldrast! Then Aunt Mummeline kept following the lonely paths through the dense forest, over the green meadows, along the steep cliffs, down, down to the distant city. In Waldrast the boys carried on worse than ever. As for Kasperle, he was in the seventh heaven. At dinner there was no Aunt Mummeline to scold him, he didn't hear a single cross word. The teacher's wife even laughed heartily several times at his funny faces. The schoolmaster was also much amused and Kasperle kept wishing: If only Aunt Mummeline would never come back!

But it never occurred to Aunt Mummeline to stay away. She had a very strange experience down in the city; and the very next day, after making her purchases, she started back to Waldrast, posthaste. She arrived in the village in the late afternoon. Mrs. Habermus had gone with Lenchen and Lorchen to visit her godmother. The schoolmaster sat working in his study; and Kas-

perle was about to leave the house to join his comrades, when he saw Aunt Mummeline coming. She didn't see him. She strutted along as if she had won a battle. Kasperle, somewhat frightened, slipped back into the living room, and when he heard her footsteps he hid in a dark corner behind the stove. The little rascal didn't quite know, himself, why he did this. The memory of the faces he had made at her troubled his conscience somewhat, and all the more now that Aunt Mummeline carried herself as if she had the best hickory switch in the world in her basket. A few moments later her voice resounded through the house, and the teacher came out of his room hurriedly. Her first question was: "Where is Kasper?"

Kasperle was frightened and very stealthily set up a couple of boards in front of his hiding place, so that Aunt Mummeline could not see him. Meantime Mrs. Habermus returned. She greeted her aunt as though she had just returned from a long, long journey. But her aunt hastily inquired of her, too: "Where is Kasper?"

"The youngsters are all playing down by the brook. He is probably with them," said Mrs. Habermus; for she had given Kasperle permission to play with his comrades.

But Aunt Mummeline began to search the room first. She peered under the sofa, opened the huge chest, and then looked in the cubbyhole behind the stove; but the board, in front, hid Kasperle completely. "He isn't in there," she exclaimed. "Now

I'm going to tell you who Kasperle really is, and let me say you'll be surprised!"

And, indeed, they were surprised as Aunt Mummeline began her story. Poor Kasperle was on pins and needles, for—what did he hear? His whole history, told by Aunt Mummeline! Down in the village there was a Kasperle man who had held up a carved wooden Kasperle, proclaiming loudly: "If you find someone who looks like this, catch him, for the Duke of Singerlingen is offering a large reward for him. Then he went on to say that Kasperle was an ancient, genuine, live Kasperle; and he told all about the mischief he had gotten into at the castle. "You see now, don't you?" exclaimed Aunt Mummeline. "I always said there was something queer about that boy. What a blessing it will be if he's caught and locked up. It's the Duke's wish."

Thereupon the schoolmaster sighed a deep sigh, while his wife said compassionately: "Poor little fellow!"

As for Kasperle, in the cubbyhole, the tears were rolling down his cheeks, and he wished he might run out and embrace the kind woman. Surely the teacher's family would not deliver him into the hands of his enemies! But now Aunt Mummeline began again in her loud, harsh voice: "The Kasperle man is coming very shortly; he is bringing several guardsmen with him, and they intend to take Kasperle right along. I told them where the little hobgoblin is, and see, here are the florins they gave me for it. My, but I'm glad this horrible rascal is to be taken away and

locked up. But we must take care that he doesn't escape. However, the guardsmen will look out for that."

And again the teacher's wife said: "Poor, poor Kasperle!" and her husband sighed compassionately. Aunt Mummeline got up, saying she was going to unpack her basket hastily, and then wait for Kasperle to come home. She advised the schoolmaster to go and tell the mayor, so he'd understand why the guardsmen were coming. This the schoolmaster did. He and Aunt Mummeline left the room, so that only the teacher's wife remained.

Kasperle in his cubbyhole trembled with fright. Oh—if he only could flee, he thought, or conceal himself somewhere until the Kasperle man and the guards had left again. This meant getting out of the room first, for his pursuers would be sure to look into the corner where he was hiding. As the teacher's wife sat there quietly beside the table, she looked so kind and gentle that Kasperle could not help feeling that she would not betray him. So, with a sudden impulse, he hastily darted out from his hiding place. Mrs. Habermus was startled. "Kasperle!" she exclaimed. "Why—why there you are! Did you hear everything?"

Kasperle nodded sadly. He came quietly nearer, embraced the kind woman and looked up at her beseechingly. "Please let me escape!" he begged, "please let me escape!"

"Of course I will," the teacher's wife nodded; "I can well understand why you're so anxious to get away, you poor little sinner, you!" and she patted him gently. She reflected a few mo-

ments, and, taking some bread from the table, she filled his pockets; then she gave him some pennies, and said hastily: "Take care of yourself! Go out through the kitchen door! My husband will forgive me for helping you."

Then she gave Kasperle a parting kiss and let him out through the kitchen door, which opened into the garden. Beside the garden was the churchyard, and as Kasperle was running so hastily away, he noticed that the church door was open. I'll hide in the tower, he thought. And in a twinkling he was inside. It was high time, too, for from the schoolhouse, Aunt Mummeline's voice resounded! "They're coming!"

And they really were coming. The Kasperle man led the procession, and three guardsmen followed, and then came the villagers, who, seeing them approach, had hastened to join them. "What has happened?" "Why are the guards coming into our peaceful village?" all inquired anxiously. And there was loud talking back and forth, until Aunt Mummeline finally explained that they were coming to get Kasperle; and she wondered if any one had seen him.

"The boys are playing down by the brook," someone shouted. At once several started down to catch Kasperle, for Aunt Mummeline had given the impression that the little rogue was a wicked, wicked villain.

But where was Kasperle, pray tell?

The boys hadn't seen him, the mayor hadn't seen him, the schoolmaster didn't know where he was; no one had seen



Kasperle. "He has escaped!" shouted Aunt Mummeline and the Kasperle man. "We'll search," exclaimed the guard. "Make way; we'll search the house first." "All must help," shouted the mayor. "What a shame it would be if anyone whom the Duke wanted were to escape from Waldrast! Move on; all must join in the search!"

And they all did search. But Kasperle's companions hunted most zealously, for each one secretly thought: If I find Kasperle, I will let him escape. The schoolmaster's wife was the only one who didn't join in the search, and no one asked her to. She put



Lenchen and Lorchén to bed quietly; and, when they began to weep bitterly over their dear Kasperle, she comforted them by saying gently: "It isn't likely that anything will happen to him!"

The peasants and guards searched all the houses, barns, and stalls, but in vain. Kasperle was nowhere to be found. Finally, someone said: "Now we must look in the church."

The old sexton had locked the church in the meantime, and, since he was old and feeble, he didn't bother about the commotion in the village. He sat in his armchair, asleep, while the guards kept walking around the church and saying: "He can't

be in there, he has certainly escaped." But where? Had he fled into the woods, or up into the mountain solitudes? Had he gone to the city, they would surely have seen him!

"To-morrow early, the whole region will be searched thoroughly. Everyone who is able to walk will have to help," said the mayor. "What a disgrace it would be if he should escape!"

"Yes, we will all start in again at daybreak," everyone exclaimed. "And to-day the village must be guarded; don't allow even a cat to leave, nor Kasperle, of all persons."

When Aunt Mummeline returned home, she said: "I'm downright tired, but I'm not going to bed. I'll wager Kasperle is prowling around somewhere in the house, and I'll catch him yet!"



CHAPTER XI

One Adventure after Another

Gradually the village grew quieter and quieter. Kasperle, within a corner of the church tower, heard the noise die away; and now, for the first time, he ventured to look about to see where he really was. He found himself in a dark room; near him was a stairway leading up to the entrance to the tower, where the last, faint rays of day gleamed down from above.

Just as Kasperle was thinking that it might be a good plan to climb up into the tower, he heard a voice from without say: "Tomorrow we must see if he is not in the church." It was the two guardsmen who were just passing by to take up their watch in

the center of the village street. Then Kasperle, trembling with fear, clambered up the very narrow stairway into the tower. Here, he thought, they would not be likely to find him.

But the tower of the Waldrast church had been inhabited for many, many years, by owls. An old great-grandmother owl, who was living just at this time, related that even her great-grandmother had related that *her* great-grandmother's great-grandmother had lived in the tower. And no one had ever disturbed the owls. When the boys of Waldrast pulled the rope below, in order to ring the bell—only the good boys were allowed to do this—then the owls merely huddled closer together in their nests. They were quite used to the sound of the bell; they even seemed to take delight in seeing it swing back and forth. Nor did anyone ever go up into the tower; for the stairway was rickety, and to climb up on it was dangerous.

But Kasperle knew nothing about the danger. He climbed higher and higher; and the owls, who were just blinking the sleep of day out of their eyes, looked with astonishment upon this unusual intruder who was clambering up the stairway toward them. They were terribly frightened. The old great-grandmother warned hoarsely: "Look out there, he is trying to get the little ones, the nestlings!" Then, all of the owls screeched; there was an unearthly noise, and they all whirled forth. Then, a great fluttering and rustling about Kasperle's head, and he found himself looking into the flaming, angry eyes of many owls. He was frightened out of his wits. An indescribable fear of these uncanny

creatures seized him, and he started hastily down the steps again. But he missed his footing and fell, the owls screeched wildly, and tumbling Kasperle, in his fear and confusion, seized the bell rope that dangled before his nose.

“Boom, boom, boom!” there was a deep, muffled tone.

Now the owls were doubly frightened, for they were not accustomed to hearing bells at this time of the day. They flitted about more agitated than ever. Kasperle clung more firmly to the rope; and the brazen, clanging bell added to the confusion. “Boom, boom, boom, bimbam, bimbam!” The bell sounded louder and louder. Kasperle wanted to let go of the rope, but the bell swung to and fro before him with increasing force. The owls fluttered madly about; and Kasperle, clinging to the rope, unable to get a foothold, swung himself out of the tower window.

“Boom, boom, boom, bimbam, bimbam!” The sound of the bell roused the sleeping village. The dogs began to bark, and the people awoke from their sleep in fear. The bell was ringing, what could it be? Master-tailor Pimperling was the first to run out into the village street. “Fire,” he shouted, “Fire, fire!”

The call was taken up by others. Everywhere people rushed out of their houses shouting, “Fire, fire!” And all looked about to see where in the world the fire could possibly be. “Bring the water pails, bring the water pails!” commanded the mayor, for at that time there were no fire engines in Waldrast. Everybody was running about to get water pails, and asking one another where the fire was, until some one struck upon the happy thought

that surely the person who rang the bell would know. Yes, indeed. But who rang it?

Kasperle, at the foot of the belfry tower, was scared stiff. With some hesitation, he finally attached himself to one of the beams, let go of the rope, and skidded, rather roughly, down the stairway. Halfway down he caught himself. He was completely dazed by what had occurred; and, as he heard the commotion in the village streets outside, he could not understand what it all meant, until finally it occurred to him that the sound of the bell had awakened the whole village from its sleep. He heard the cry: "Fire, fire," he heard loud shouts and questioning before the church door; and then, as Kasperle tumbled down the rest of the stairway, he heard someone outside, in a very loud voice, shout: "I'll bet it was that Kasperle. He hid himself in the church." It was Aunt Mummeline who shouted this.

"But the door is locked," another voice replied.

"We'll have to call the sexton. He must unlock the door," two other voices demanded. "Quick, bring him here!"

"Bim—bam, bim—bam!" The tones of the bell grew fainter, but Kasperle still heard the screeching and fluttering of the owls in the tower above. Where should he go? The owls were in the tower, and they would peck his eyes out; below were the villagers, and woe to him if they caught him! He heard someone call out: "There comes the sexton. Now be careful, we must catch Kasperle!"

Again, it was Aunt Mummeline's voice, and Kasperle looked



"Who rang the bell?"

about in complete despair. How was he to escape? Presently, his eyes fell upon a long pole that stood near him, and mischief flashed across his mind.

The key crouched in the lock, the door swung open. "Hello, but it's dark in here! Quick, bring a couple of lanterns!" someone commanded. And then there was an uproar, a chorus of resounding yells. Aunt Mummeline had fallen over the pole which Kasperle, from the inside, was holding across the open door. Such a commotion!

"Thunder and lightning!" There lay the big fat mayor.

"Great Cæsar's ghost!" The guardsman fell over the mayor, and Master-tailor Pimperling ejaculated: "Brass buttons and yardsticks! The devil's broke loose!"

"Hey, you are crushing me to death!" screeched Aunt Mummeline.

"Bring the lanterns—the lanterns!" One after another tripped and fell into the entrance, and, in the general confusion and medley of loud voices, Kasperle managed to extricate himself from the hubbub and get out into the open. He pressed himself close against the wall, and quietly slipped around the tower to the opposite side, arriving just in time to avoid the light of the lanterns that were now appearing at the entrance. The whole village was now assembling about the tower; and when the lanterns were turned upon the confused mass of humanity in the doorway, they all cried: "This is one of Kasperle's pranks."

"We must hunt through the entire tower," said the mayor

who raised himself up, groaning; and Aunt Mummeline shrieked: "He shall not escape us, the wicked scoundrel!"

Master-tailor Pimperling, who was very small, thin, and courageous, volunteered to go up into the tower. He took an old night watchman's pike and a lantern, and cautiously ascended the stairway. He looked into every cranny of the tower and under each step of the stairway to see that Kasperle was not hiding there, while below, others were searching the vestibule, the church, and everywhere; but Kasperle was not to be found.

The owls were frightened as the light penetrated their living room. It blinded them, and they slyly hid themselves. The bell was still vibrating and gently swinging to and fro; but although Master Pimperling cast about his lantern in every direction, he saw nothing of Kasperle.

Below, the Kasperle man said: "We will find him; he must be there!" And when he told about the big reward that the Duke had offered, they all searched more diligently, and all agreed: "He must be there. Who else could have rung the bell?"

In the meantime, Kasperle had run, at full speed, toward the forest. Since everybody had gone to the church and no one had guarded the roads that led away from the village, Kasperle succeeded in getting into the forest unnoticed. He did not select the road that led down into the city, but directed his course in another direction where he knew that the forest extended itself over many, many miles. There was a road through this forest which led into another, strange valley into which the people of

Waldrast never came. But in the darkness of the dense forest Kasperle soon lost his way. Wearied and footsore, he clambered over stones and fell over uprooted trees; and after pursuing his course a couple of hours, he sank to the ground dead tired. Immediately he fell asleep, and when he awoke he saw the sun shining through the branches of the tall, primeval pines. Nothing but forest extended around him as far as he could see, and all was still.

Kasperle seated himself upon a large moss-covered rock and looked about in despair. Now he was again in the wide, wide world, utterly forlorn; now he had no foster parents any more, and no happy comrades. He thought of the forest house; alas, if he had only remained there and had not run away! After all, that was his home. He would have been glad to have returned, but how was he to find the way? Moreover, he would have to go by the castle where dear Rosemary lived, where everybody would know him, and he would be caught and put in prison. The thought terrified Kasperle. The Duke and Aunt Mummeline—they were his enemies; at the mere thought of them, he sprang to his feet and ran farther into the forest. He wandered and wandered for many hours; there was nothing but forest; it seemed to be endless.

Finally Kasperle grew tired again and sat down upon the ground. He took a piece of bread which the good schoolmaster's wife had given him, and wearily began munching away. As he sat there he heard a murmur and a rustle; perhaps there was a brook not far away. Being very thirsty he got up and went in the direc-

tion of the sound. After a little while he saw that the forest was getting lighter, and presently he came to a mountain brook that fell with a great roar over a high cliff. At the brook the forest had receded, and around its edge there grew raspberry bushes. Many of the ripe berries had fallen into the water, and they shimmered red out of a background of white pebbles. Tall stalks of blue helmet flowers fringed the banks of the brook, in the middle of which lay a tiny island. And upon the island there grew large, white umbellated flowers literally covered with shimmering, golden-brown butterflies. The sun glistened upon the foam-covered water as it poured down from the cliff, dancing and sparkling and radiating a thousand colors. Kasperle was lost in admiration. It seemed to him like a fairy nook. Everything seemed to call and beckon to him: "Come Kasperle, come!" The water sprayed his face, the raspberry bushes bent under the weight of their heavy-laden fruit; nor was Kasperle indifferent to it all. He sat down and feasted. First he drank the clear, sparkling water, then ate bread and raspberries until he was plumb full. Then he laid down on the bank of the brook, listened to the roar of the water as it tumbled over the high cliff, and let the sun shine upon his little body.

It was not long until Kasperle was asleep. He slept and slept far into the warm summer night. Once he awoke, and through a notch over the black wall of the forest he saw the narrow crescent moon against the sky; the brooklet ran like a silver stream from the cliff above him. For a little while Kasperle looked on

in wonderment; he saw the silver lights reflected upon the water; he saw above him, in the dark sky of the night, the thin crescent and many, many stars. It was beautiful and peaceful. Kasperle moved, stretched himself, and fell asleep again.

All of a sudden he heard a loud voice in his sleep: "Hey there, wake up, you!"

Kasperle raised himself up in fright and looked about in confusion. There stood, near him, a boy, not much larger than himself; he wore a shirt and a small pair of knitted trousers and a faded, bulging little hat with a large tuft of rooster feathers at the side. It looked almost like the headgear that the robber chieftain in the Kasperle theater used to wear. The boy's eyes had a lively sparkle; in fact, the little fellow had every appearance of being so amused that Kasperle could not help laughing too.

And Kasperle's laugh was contagious. At first the strange boy rolled his eyes in astonishment, as Kasperle's grin shot from ear to ear, but soon he burst into a loud laugh. His laugh, in turn, started Kasperle up again, and so they laughed a long time, as if they were laughing for a wager; and the walls of the cliff laughed too as they threw back the joyous echo. But no one else heard the laughter except a number of goats that came politely clattering over the stones and surrounded the two boys. But suddenly the strange boy sprang up and shouted: "Rosemary is missing!" At that he ran away and was gone in a flash.

Rosemary! Kasperle, in his bewilderment, forgot all about laughing. Was the dear little Countess here in the forest, and had

he again come nearer to the castle? The goats sniffed around him confidently, but he sat there as if he had fallen out of the clouds. Now the strange boy was coming back again, was driving before him a snow-white kid. He said, as he approached: "This is Rosemary; she came very near getting lost."

Kasperle shook his head. "No," he muttered dejectedly, "Rosemary is a Count's daughter, not a goat!"

The strange boy laughed hilariously. "Certainly, the name is not that of a goat," he said. "But Rosemary has also descended from a castle; the old hermitess, Barbe, brought her from there."

"Is it far from here?" asked Kasperle timidly. In fact, he thought that the castle must be within hailing distance.

"Far—the castle?" The strange boy regarded him with astonishment; the question seemed to him very odd. Why should the castle concern him? "It's far, all right," he went on; "the hermitess always takes about two days for the journey; she comes from there."

That seemed to satisfy Kasperle. It now occurred to him that it was long past breakfast time, and he rummaged through his pockets for his last piece of bread. "I am hungry," he said, sighing.

"So am I." The strange boy also took a piece of bread from his pocket and said: "I come here because of the raspberries. Nowhere else are they so good as here, and no one knows about this place, not even Grouchy Matthias."

"And who is he?" inquired Kasperle seating himself beside

a raspberry bush, as his companion had done. As the two little fellows sat there, stripping the bushes of their surplus of red fruit, the strange boy explained that Grouchy Matthias was a forester, that he lived near the Duke's hunting castle, called Deerlodge, which was near-by.

"Does the Duke live here?" Trembling with fear, at the expected answer to his own question, Kasperle let a large raspberry, together with his bread, fall into the brook; but he fished them both out again as the strange youngster replied: "My, but you are stupid! The Duke lives in his residence town, far, far from here! He comes here only twice a year; the rest of the time the castle is empty. You don't seem to know anything! Where in the world do you come from? What is your name? Who are you?"

Kasperle sighed deeply. He wanted to give his little speech again, but the sharp, clear eyes of the strange boy looked at him so earnestly that he bowed his head in confusion.

"Did you do anything that was bad?" asked the other quite sternly.

Kasperle shook his head, and then told the boy who he was. He told him everything. His strange visitor laughed with him, and shared in his sorrow, too; and when Kasperle had finished, the newcomer extended to him his little brown hand and exclaimed: "Poor Kasperle! But, do you know, I want to be your friend. I am Michel, the goatherd, and live in Hochdorf. There, do you want my bread?" Michel, in the sudden tenderness of his emotions, was at a loss to know how to express his sympathy

and good will toward Kasperle, so he gave him his bread, though his supply was by no means large for a boy with an appetite so honestly acquired. But Michel thought that, when one meets a friend in the forest, as destitute as Kasperle was, one might well endure a little hunger, if in so doing he could help him. But Kasperle, seeing that Michel had given him his last morsel, suggested that they divide it. This they did, making up the deficiency with the surplus of raspberries and discussing, at the same time, what Kasperle should do next.

Michel would have preferred to have taken Kasperle home with him; but that wouldn't do, for he himself had no home of his own. He was the son of a poor widow who lived many miles away in a little village, and he had apprenticed himself in order to help his mother who had three other smaller children to care for. He slept in the hayloft of a farmer, but was not permitted to bring any strange boys with him. Kasperle gave a deep sigh and said sadly: "I must be going on."

Then a happy thought flashed through Michel's mind, and he danced for joy and shouted: "Hurray, I've got it, I've got it!"

Kasperle naturally was curious to know at once what it was that he had gotten, and then Michel confided to him that the castle was to be his home. Kasperle was struck stiff and dumb with this astonishing announcement. Michel, however, went on to explain that no one lived in the castle, that Grouchy Matthias and his wife seldom went there, and if they should, he could hear them coming. He knew that there was a very tiny side door

which had long since been left unlocked, because Matthias had lost the key. "I have often been in it; it's fine inside!" confided Michel to his new friend in a whisper. "You can live in it, and then we can meet each other every day and herd the goats together. And if I tell the farmer's wife that I am very, very hungry, I am sure she will give me enough for both of us."

"But what about the Duke?" Kasperle became very nervous, and acted as if he expected to see the Duke come around the corner any minute.

Michel laughed at him. "You are as timid as a rabbit; the Duke comes to Deerlodge at most twice a year, and you can find out when, in advance. Come now, hurry, I'll show you where the door is!" He sprang to his feet to see where the goats were. They showed no disposition to stray away, for he found them, sleepy and lazy, lying upon a grassy spot; and the two friends could safely stroll over to the castle. Kasperle was astonished that it was so near. A few steps through the forest, and they were there. In a meadow, surrounded on all sides by a forest, lay a gray castle; it had a thick tower and looked somewhat gloomy. Not far from it, at the edge of the meadow, stood a little house, the forester's house. Everything was still as death, not even a dog barked as the boys approached the castle. Michel led his friend around the gray walls and showed him a little door, hidden from view, behind a clump of bushes. "That is the entrance," he said; "and from here you can slip directly into the forest, and no one will see you."

They both crept through the bushes; Michel pressed upon the rusty latch, the door opened, and there they actually stood in the castle. A narrow, whitewashed passageway led onward and upward, and Michel followed it boldly. Kasperle followed somewhat hesitantly, but as he found the castle perfectly quiet, he also became bolder. The two boys unlocked one door after another, they went through all the passageways, ascended all the stairways, and Michel was very much offended when Kasperle said, all of a sudden: "The Count's castle was even finer."

"There is nothing finer," retorted Michel, as he jerked open a door. It led into a large room which did not have the rather somber appearance that the other chambers had, but was furnished in a way to suggest cheer and comfort. The sofas and chairs were all covered with rose-colored silk, the walls were hung with bright pictures in large golden frames, and cherubs, carrying garlands of roses, decorated the ceiling.

Kasperle now admitted that this was finer than anything in the Count's castle; and Michel, who had been angered by the disparaging remark made by his companion a moment before, was now satisfied. Kasperle was also happy, now that he was to remain in the castle; and as, in wandering about, they came to a very beautiful room in which there was a wide golden bed, he said he would love to sleep here. "I believe this is the Duke's room," whispered Michel, somewhat shy. "But you cannot sleep in here!"

But—plump—there lay Kasperle in the bed with silken

covers and exclaimed: "Hurray, here is where I am going to sleep. It's fine, fine, fine!"

Michel also wanted to get into the bed, but he thought of his poor goats which he had left unwatched. "I must go," he said regretfully; and in a twinkling Kasperle leaped out of bed again and declared: "I am going with you." In mutual concord they both left the castle again, returned to the goats, found them quietly grazing where they had left them, and then sat down to take counsel in regard to the future. Michel thought it best to have an understanding that whenever he passed the castle he was to whistle, and as soon as Kasperle heard it, he was to come out and go with him; then they would play together, herd goats, and eat their luncheon. Both were very happy over the days ahead of them; but a lingering, anxious thought kept recurring to Kasperle's mind: "But the Duke, what if he should return to the castle!"

"Impossible, he does not come until fall!" And Michel waved his hand in confirmation, as if it were in his power to warn off the Duke; and Kasperle was satisfied. With the aid of his new friend, Michel then rounded up the goats preparatory to driving them home; and, when they came in sight of the castle, the two boys separated. Kasperle again crept through the bushes, opened the little door, and stood alone in the castle. His feet seemed to clang loudly upon the floor and then, like a timid rabbit, he was seized with fear. He wanted to turn back and follow Michel; but then he thought of the silken bed in which he

longed to sleep, and he ran rapidly up the stairway and through the passageways until he came to the room. There he quickly slipped into the golden bed, pulled the silken covers up over his ears, and was actually asleep in five minutes. Nothing disturbed his peaceful sleep. Once he heard a horn in the distance, but it only half awakened him. Out in the meadow, near the forest edge, stood the forester, whom Michel had called Grouchy Matthias; he played an evening song on his hunting horn. Solemnly it reëchoed through the still forest, and then all was quiet save a slight rustling of the trees; they whispered to one another the secret that a remarkable little guest had arrived, at the lonely castle, of whom even the forester himself knew nothing.



CHAPTER XII

Kasperle Turns Ghost

When Kasperle awoke in his silken bed, the golden light was filtering through the drawn curtains. He sprang out of bed and peeked through a little slit, although Michel had warned him not to do this. Outside, the forest meadow lay directly in the path of the rising sun; and the singing and warbling of the

birds, as they greeted the new day, penetrated his room, even though it was locked up tight. What a cheerful sound! Kasperle, exultant, raised his little voice and began to sing, too. It was fortunate indeed that there was no one else in the castle, for his singing was enough to frighten any one. It sounded as if ten creaky hinges and three rusty weather vanes were squeaking at once. But Kasperle enjoyed his singing and ran all over the castle as he sang: upstairs and downstairs, landing finally in the kitchen. Here it dawned upon him that he was terribly hungry, and his singing stopped. He began snooping around in all the dishes and cupboards, but nowhere did he find anything to eat. He sighed as he thought of the well-filled pantries at the ducal castle, and was about to leave the kitchen, when he spied a little door off to one corner. He unlocked it quickly and a dimly lighted room, sending forth the most delectable odors, opened up before him. Kasperle kept sniffing and sniffing, and as he looked around, he suddenly beheld long strings of sausages hanging from the ceiling, there were some hams and a few sides of bacon, too. It was the smoke room which Kasperle had thus accidentally discovered, and these provisions were left over from the Duke's last visit.

Kasperle was amazed! Nor did he stop to reflect long whether to help himself or not. He leaped up high and kept on leaping till he finally caught hold of a sausage; then he tugged away at it until it came loose. After locking the room, he ran contentedly with his sausage until he came to the door where Michel was to whistle for him. He had to wait awhile, and, in

the meantime, he kept munching away at his sausage so vigorously that, when Michel finally arrived, he had devoured a large part of it.

His comrade opened his eyes wide in astonishment, as Kasperle told him about the sausage room. "Oh, you ought not do that; you ought not eat the sausages," he said very much distressed. "They belong to the Duke!"

But Kasperle, being a frivolous little rascal, didn't see anything wrong in stealing sausages, and insisted that the Duke had forgotten all about them long ago; and Michel believed this all too readily. So they feasted on sausage and bread, ate their fill of raspberries, and passed a very happy day together. The goats were well behaved and gave them no trouble at all. In fact, when Kasperle cut up some of his monkeyshines for Michel, they stood around and bleated in astonishment, for they had never seen anything like that before. They bleated and Michel laughed. He was nearly convulsed with laughter. Finally he got a stomach ache from laughing so hard and he flung himself down in the grass. Kasperle followed him, and there they both lay roasting in the sun, until Kasperle was able to cut up capers again and Michel was able to laugh.

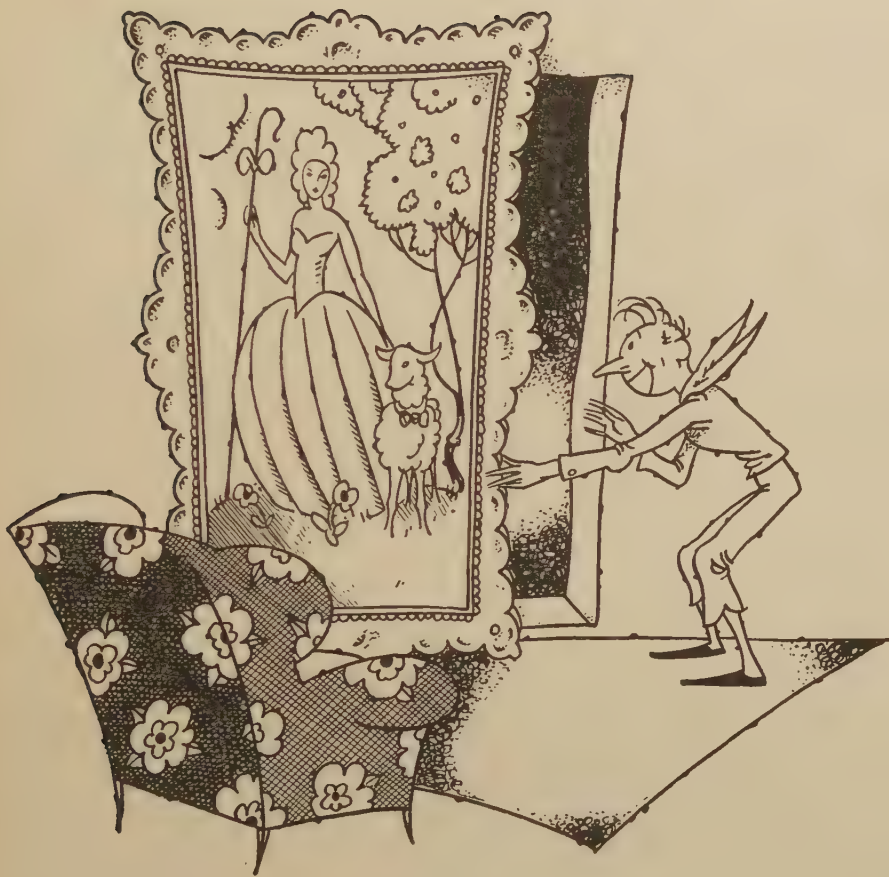
Thus the day passed by. In the evening Michel drove his goats home, and Kasperle returned to the lonely castle. He didn't look around much, but crept right into his silken bed. There he slept until the golden light streaming from behind the curtains wakened him again. Then another happy day dawned for

him. He ran through the castle, took another sausage from the smoke room and was waiting at the doorway when Michel came along. He seemed to be in a terrible hurry and called out in a half-subdued voice from a distance: "Hide, hide!"

Kasperle dashed into the bushes, and Michel coming nearer, whispered: "Grouchy Matthias is standing out in front of his house; don't let him see you!"

The forester wondered a little why the goatherd was driving his goats so close to the castle. But he didn't see Kasperle. For Kasperle, getting down on all fours, darted in among the goats and quickly disappeared in the woods.

Again, the day passed for the two comrades like a pleasant dream. Night came, and then the morning; and thus one day after another passed by, and all were bright and sunny and full of cheer. Thus they had spent over a week together, when one morning Kasperle awoke and wondered why it was so dark. Perhaps it's still night time, he thought; then he heard an incessant splashing and roaring; and, looking out through the tiny slit, he saw that it was raining. It poured down in torrents—splish, splash, splish, splash. The gray, solemn clouds hung low, the forest looked as if it were still asleep; not a sound was stirring. And no Michel came with his goats. He sat at home helping the farmer's wife clean vegetables, and he thought longingly of his friend Kasperle. Kasperle's longing for Michel was not less great. It was terribly monotonous in the dreary castle; and, not knowing what to do with himself, Kasperle began to wander



Kasperle looked behind the picture.

through the castle from top to bottom. He tried all the upholstered chairs, lolled around on all of the sofas, and finally came back to the Duke's bedroom. There were all sorts of pictures in this room, among them a shepherdess leading a lamb by a light blue ribbon. Kasperle was especially fond of this picture. In order to get a good look at it, he came so close that his big nose nearly bumped into it; indeed, he even began to stroke the lamb. In doing this, he discovered a slight elevation in the ribbon around its neck; and, wishing to know the meaning of this, he pressed on it firmly, as of course he would. There was a sudden click, the picture began to swing out from the wall, and, to his great astonishment, Kasperle found himself gazing into a little room. He felt a rush of cool damp air against his body.

In terror he sprang back into bed, crept away down under the covers, and there he lay for some time, trembling with fear. But everything remained quiet. All he could hear was the incessant pitter patter of the rain out of doors. Timidly projecting his head from beneath the covers, he found the mysterious door, which the picture had concealed, still standing half open. In the room back of it, everything was perfectly quiet.

Kasperle sighed a deep sigh. He was afraid, but he was also curious. Finally his curiosity got the better of him and he climbed out of bed and looked behind the picture. Before him lay a very small and narrow room with a stairway leading down below. The room itself was bathed in a greenish light, and Kasperle

noticed that it had a round window which was grown over with ivy, the ivy being so thick that the window could probably not be seen from the outside. There was nothing in the room except an old-fashioned chest, into which you may be sure Kasperle hurriedly thrust his nose.

What a sight he beheld! There were several gold and silver goblets, a gold chain, and a big bag of gold. Over all there was spread a somewhat faded red-velvet curtain. Kasperle wrapped this around him, hung the gold chain about his neck, and thus he paraded up and down for quite a while. Finally his curiosity was again aroused, so he threw everything back into the chest and began to descend the stairs step by step. He felt somewhat timid; and as the damp darkness yawned toward him, he suddenly turned around and slipped back into his bedroom again. He pushed the picture back, but it didn't swing into place very easily. Finally, however, it snapped shut, and the secret room was no longer visible.

Kasperle hunted again for the button on the neckband of the lamb; he found it, pressed it, and again the door swung open. Michel must see that, thought Kasperle, as he closed the door again. Then he went around everywhere in the castle, examining all the pictures, because he thought there must be a secret door behind each one. But no matter how much he pressed the noses, mouths, eyes, and stomachs of the staid lords and ladies whose portraits adorned the walls, not another door opened.

Meantime night had come on, and Kasperle crept back into bed. He rejoiced at the thought of another day, for the weather would surely be fine by then.

But the rain kept pouring down. The following day the sky was more leaden, the woods looked still more dreary, and again Michel stayed at home with his goats. Time dragged slowly, so Kasperle began rummaging around in the castle again. He made a very careful investigation of the secret room and even descended the stairs part way, but didn't risk going very far. He procured another sausage from the smoke room, but somehow it didn't taste so good as before. Michel's bread and the raspberries in the woods were much better. But it kept on raining. Down it poured and poured, and the following morning it was still pouring. Kasperle remained in bed out of sheer disgust, till all of a sudden the room was flooded with a bright light. He jumped up and looked out. The sun had just come out, it had finally conquered the rain clouds. Here and there bright patches of deep blue sky were visible, and the gray clouds were racing away as if in great fear that Madam Sun would catch them by their little tails. Hurrah! The weather would surely be fine to-morrow.

Kasperle danced around in the room for joy. Then he ran upstairs and downstairs and all over the castle. He got another large sausage, which he planned to take with him on the morrow, and now he crept into his silken bed, contented. To-morrow, to-morrow he would see his little friend Michel again.

In the night the moon came out. It was only a faint crescent,

but even so it emitted a fine wondrous light. It hung directly over the forest meadow when Kasperle happened to wake up suddenly, and, half asleep, he thought: Pshaw, it's raining again. Peeking out through the tiny slit in the curtain, he saw the moon gleaming and discovered that the rustling noise came from the woods. But he heard something else, too: horses' hoofs and voices! It seemed to come from the direction of the forester's house, and in the clear moonlight he saw a rider stop in front of the house opposite. An uncanny feeling came over him. He quickly crept back into bed, way down under the silken covers, and presently he was asleep again.

When he awoke the following morning he was startled. For, what did he hear? A rumbling and a rattling, a clanging and a banging, so that it was by no means so quiet in the castle as it had been. Moreover he heard a loud voice exclaim: "Matthias, Matthias, let's scrub the Duke's room first!"

With one bound, Kasperle was out of bed. A terrible fear seized him. People were in the castle! What if he should be caught now! For a few moments he was so overcome with horror that he didn't know what to do. Finally, he happened to think of the room behind the picture. He pressed the button quickly, the door opened quietly, and, seizing his belongings and his sausage, he popped into the room. And it was high time, for heavy menacing footsteps sounded on the floor; and hardly had the door behind the picture closed before the forester and his wife entered the room. Kasperle heard a loud scream. The forest-

er's wife had gotten a glimpse of the topsy-turvy bed. "Matthias, Matthias," she exclaimed, "upon my word, someone has been in the castle! And, good heavens, he slept in the Duke's bed! If our gracious lord should find that out!"

The forester grumbled and muttered, and Kasperle heard him say it couldn't have been anything but a ghost, that he would have seen a live person; besides, all the doors were locked. "But, Matthias, the little door was open!" exclaimed the forester's wife, "the one to which we lost the key. Land of mercy, if anything is stolen!"

The forester's wife wept and cried, the forester scolded and grumbled, and Kasperle heard him say he would bolt the little doorway.

"No, no," cried his wife, "use our big padlock, that will hold better!"

Kasperle was terrified. If the forester should lock the door with a padlock, then he couldn't get out and—. Just then the forester's wife remarked: "The Duke is coming to-morrow, you know. Hurry, Matthias, so we can get everything ready!"

Holy smoke! The Duke was to come to-morrow, and they were to lock up everything. How was he to get out to Michel? Then a bright idea flashed over his mind; at night he would climb out of the window and sleep in the woods. Thus he comforted himself the whole day long. Of course, he had to stay in the little room, for the forester and his wife were busy working about the castle, so he didn't dare leave his hiding place. When

it began to grow dark, the castle became quiet. He heard a few doors bang shut; but after that everything remained quiet, and he dared to open the picture door. Picking up the sausage which he had half devoured, he stole quietly through the Duke's bedroom, turned the latch and—found that he was locked in.

The room was locked from the outside; and when he tried to open the window, he noticed, for the first time, that it was covered with an iron grating. He couldn't get out, he was caught. Kasperle wailed and sighed and cried and ran frantically to and fro, but to no avail; he couldn't get out. Finally he crept angrily into the Duke's bed, which had been newly made up with fine white linen. He howled and tossed around on the pillows; and he didn't sleep like a log, but kept waking up again and again.

In the morning he heard a loud commotion: horns blowing, carriage wheels, horses' hoofs, and a medley of voices. Jumping up in fright and looking out, he beheld a whole train of riders approaching, as well as several carriages. The Duke had made the journey to his hunting castle in the early morning, for the day threatened to be very hot.

So that was the Duke, his enemy. Jiminy crickets! When Kasperle saw him dismount from his carriage, he hastily stole away to his hiding place. Trembling with fear, and utterly confused and dejected, he planked himself down on the treasure chest. How now was he going to escape?

The castle grew noisy. Kasperle heard footsteps, then the Duke's bedroom door being unlocked, then a loud cry of terror.

Heavens, the bed! Stupid Kasperle hadn't given that a thought.

From his hiding place, he could distinguish all the voices perfectly. Someone scolded angrily—that was the Duke. Then someone cried—it was the forester's wife. She declared up and down that the room had been put in order and the door locked; a ghost must have been in the castle. And she told how she had found so many doors open yesterday, and in what a topsy-turvy condition the bed was. Only a ghost could have done it. She didn't tell about the missing sausages, because so far no one had discovered that they were gone. Nor did she say anything about the little door that had been left unlocked, because her conscience troubled her about that.

When the forester's wife continued to exclaim: "A ghost, a ghost, must be hiding in the castle!" Kasperle had to laugh. He held his hand over his mouth to keep from laughing out loud. But, as he was compelled to do something to give vent to his joy, he began swinging his left leg back and forth; in so doing he bumped against one of the silver goblets, and it fell to the floor with a loud crash.

There was a loud shriek in the adjoining room. The Duke exclaimed: "What was that? What was that?" Between her sobs the forester's wife replied: "The ghost, the ghost!"

"Everything must be carefully searched," commanded the Duke. "And the outside of the castle must be carefully guarded, too. Make haste, make haste, search all the rooms!"

Kasperle's heart beat hard. He heard the loud shouting in the

castle continue, and he heard someone in the adjoining room say that the doctor must be summoned, for the Duke was sick from fright. Great Caesar's ghost! If the Duke was sick, he would perhaps be confined to his bed, and Kasperle was in a worse predicament than ever.

And the Duke actually did take to his bed. The truth was he had gotten up too early in the morning, and that was what ailed him more than anything else. Meantime, while the doctor came and the chamberlain was bringing all sorts of good things to the Duke, Kasperle was sitting sorrowfully on the treasure chest. He nibbled away at his sausage, but somehow it didn't taste good to him any more; for he was thirsty and longed for the fine spring water that he and Michel had enjoyed together. Moreover, the little room was gradually getting dark, for the tiny round window didn't let in much light. It was growing dark out of doors, too, and finally night came and wrapped its inky cloak about Kasperle. But suddenly a faint, narrow beam of light penetrated his room, and to his great surprise Kasperle found a bright round hole in the wall. Carefully sliding down from the chest, he groped his way cautiously up to the hole and discovered, to his great astonishment, that he could peek right through this little hole into the Duke's bedroom. At this place, on the wall of the Duke's room, there hung a portrait of one of his ancestors. This little peek hole was located in the hilt of his sword. No one in the room could see Kasperle's glistening eyes gazing in curiosity. The Duke lay abed, the doctor was sitting beside him,

and there were two other gentlemen present. The one Kasperle immediately recognized as the Count, Rosemary's father. They were speaking of the strange disorder they had found in the castle. The Duke was telling the Count, who had not arrived until later, all about it. Kasperle pricked up his ears and snuggled up closer to the wall. Thereupon the Duke cried out: "What's that rustling noise?"

Kasperle shrank back in terror, lost his balance, and fell against the chest with a terrible bang. Jiminy crickets, there was a commotion after that, all right. "It's in the adjoining room," exclaimed the Duke, "in the dining room; hurry, hurry, investigate!"

Then everything with legs scurried into the large dining room that adjoined the Duke's bedroom. The walls of the castle were monstrously thick, and it never occurred to anyone that, behind the giant sideboards in the dining room, the walls might be very thin. The sideboards were searched; there were dishes on the shelves and linens in the drawers, but of a rustling, rollicking ghost, there was not a trace. No one dreamed that there was a narrow room between the walls.

The Duke was in a bad way as a result of fright. When Kasperle ventured to look through the peek hole again, he saw him drinking camomile tea. And just then, horror of horrors, he heard a servant remark: "If only the ghost doesn't turn out to be Kasperle!"

"Who, what, Kasperle! What made you think of him?"

The Duke raised up in bed, and rolled his eyes so frightfully, that Kasperle shrank back in terror.

"The truth is," ventured a servant who was standing on the opposite side of the room, "a guardsman reported that Kasperle was nearly caught in Waldrast a short time ago, but he managed to escape in some miraculous way, and no one has seen a sign of him since. Waldrast is near, and it's quite possible that the little hobgoblin concealed himself here."

"Yes, yes," exclaimed the Count, excitedly, "that may well be! I shouldn't be a bit surprised if the little dwarf were hiding here in the castle."

But the Duke was still of the opinion that this was hardly possible. He was rather inclined to believe that it was a ghost.

"Pardon me," said the head steward, who had just entered the room. "A ghost would not have eaten the smoke room empty! At least I've never heard of a ghost doing such a thing."

And they all agreed that they had never heard of such a thing either, and that a trick of that kind could more safely be attributed to Kasperle. When the head steward told how many sausages were missing, the Duke commanded sternly: "Let everything be searched from attic to cellar, look everywhere, even in the chimneys, and whoever finds Kasperle shall be rewarded with a title. He shall become a Count if he isn't one already. Kasperle, however, shall be severely punished; woe unto him!"

There was so much noisy discussion back and forth as to

where the little dwarf could be hiding, that no one heard the deep sigh that Kasperle uttered. He was in a terrible predicament; no doubt about that! He was locked in, he was hunted, and who knows what would happen to him if he was discovered! While this loud talking was going on in the Duke's room, Kasperle lay down on the floor, exhausted; perhaps he could sleep off his anxiety. And he actually did fall asleep. Then, in the castle, one after the other went to bed. They had hunted until they were tired and they all concluded: "It must have been a ghost and ghosts cannot be found."

Even the Duke had fallen asleep in his pretty bed which Kasperle so much envied him. But the little fellow woke up in the middle of the night, with the moon shining directly on his face. It was wonderful. Although the moon shone obliquely through the round windowpane, it lighted the tiny room with its beams. Oh, thought Kasperle, if only I were out on the forest meadow now! And feeling most forlorn and dejected, he sighed a deep and audible sigh.

"John," exclaimed the Duke in the adjoining room, "did you hear that? Someone sighed!"

"Indeed, someone did sigh," answered the servant, half awake. "It was a ghost, I'm sure!"

That struck Kasperle as being very funny; to be thought of as a ghost! He sighed again and again. The Duke commanded lights to be brought, so that they could see what it was that was sighing. Immediately, Kasperle kept quiet, for now half of the

castle was astir. Servants came, the head steward came, chamberlains kept running hither and thither and all listened for the sighing. But Kasperle was as quiet as a mouse. Soon the Duke's room grew quiet again, and everyone went back to bed.

The Duke had just fallen asleep when the sighing started up again. "The ghost is sighing again!" The Duke screamed, the servant screamed, and again all came running hither; they listened but heard nothing. Kasperle was convulsed with laughter. Bang! he bumped against the old chest which rattled threateningly.

"The ghost, the ghost!" Then Kasperle heard many voices in the room adjoining and kept very quiet, for suddenly someone said: "The wall ought to be torn down. Perhaps someone was walled in at some time or other and is now spooking around."

"That's a fine idea," answered the Duke. "Send for the court architect the first thing in the morning."

"Oh, horrors!" Kasperle's haughtiness left him. If the court architect should tear down the wall, he would be sure to find the secret door and then Kasperle would be caught. He kept as quiet as a mouse, and from then on nothing disturbed the Duke. Kasperle, however, couldn't sleep a wink after that. He thought only of flight and decided to descend the stairway in the morning. Perhaps he could find a way out.

When the sun rose and the light streamed through the green windowpane, Kasperle prepared to escape. He took his last link of sausage and the moneybag out of the chest. It jingled and

rattled and the poor Duke was awakened by the noise. But, since everything remained quiet after that, he concluded that he had been dreaming. He rang for his morning cup of chocolate. That was the last thing Kasperle heard as he descended the narrow steps into the depths below. Land of mercy, how he would have preferred a cup of chocolate to this descent into inky darkness! He groped his way through the narrow passage where the steps ended. It was damp and cold, and several times, poor, terror-stricken Kasperle felt something scurry past him. It was probably rats. Kasperle groaned in fright, the echo resounded mournfully, and just at that moment the cook let the Duke's chocolate fall out of her hands. "Merciful heavens," she exclaimed, "now there are spooks around here, too; just listen!"

All the kitchen boys and kitchen maids heard the groans, for Kasperle had just passed underneath the kitchen. The passage seemed endless. On and on he went, till suddenly he could see it growing bright in the distance. Kasperle ran as fast as he could, with his little sack of gold. A thick clump of bushes lay just ahead of him. He crept through these and found himself in the forest; not far away stood the castle. Kasperle's impulse was to keep on running, for he thought of the watchmen, who were guarding the castle. But all of a sudden someone was dancing and prancing around beside him. It was Michel and he exclaimed: "At last you have come, at last!"

Kasperle didn't stop. He seized Michel by the hand and dragged him along; the goats followed, and not until they had

gone into the woods a good distance did Kasperle begin to recount his adventures. "Look," he said, proudly offering the bag of money to Michel, "I brought this to you."

But Michel didn't take the bag. He was terribly frightened. "Kasperle," he said gently, "that money belongs to the Duke; it—it—is stolen!"

"Naw!" Kasperle opened his eyes wide. "I found it, I tell you!"

"But the castle belongs to the Duke, and everything in it belongs to the Duke!" Now Michel was as poor as a church mouse, and he would have so much preferred to be a violin player instead of a goatherd—yet he wouldn't touch the bag of gold. "You must take the money back," he said, "it doesn't belong to you. It was very wrong, to take even the sausages." And no matter how much Kasperle tried to explain, Michel remained firm.

Then Kasperle looked at his friend thoughtfully and whispered: "You are good." He let his head droop, for he was ashamed to think that he was such a good-for-nothing little Kasperle. He would have liked so much to be an upright, human boy, like Michel. And as much as he dreaded to go through the long, long passageway again, he promised Michel he would do it, nevertheless.

"Immediately," advised Michel, "before the court architect discovers the secret door." Then he fished out of his pocket a small candle and a little box of matches; he was very proud of

these possessions, but was willing to sacrifice treasures like these for a friend.

And Kasperle really did creep through the bushes back into the subterranean passage. Inside, he lighted the candle; and it wasn't half bad. He came to the top of the stairs, and then—Kasperle turned mischievous again. He hurled the moneybag violently against the door, for he wanted to give the Duke one more scare. But what happened? The door flew open! The heavy bag had struck the secret spring.

A loud scream arose. Kasperle ran down the steps head over heels into the passageway. His candle went out, but he didn't dare light it again. He ran and ran, till finally it grew light again, and he crept through the bushes. Not far away Michel was tending his goats. "Escape!" shouted Kasperle, "escape!"

Michel suspected that something terrible had happened. He drove his herd on and on; they had to run so fast, they nearly lost their senses. Not until they reached the spot where the friends first met, did Michel stop. Kasperle sank to the ground breathless. Michel brought him water and gave him some bread, and then for the first time the little rascal was able to tell what had happened. He eyed Michel with uncertainty. What would his friend say?

But Michel was, after all, a boy, and a boy who took delight in boyish pranks. He laughed, and said he thought the Duke would probably be pleased with the bag of gold, and at least this good would come of it: he knew now where the secret room

was. "But now," he added sadly, "you have no place to stay. To be sure there is a narrow cave between these rocks, but you couldn't live here very long. And—and," Michel sighed a deep sigh, "what will you do, when I don't come any more?"

Kasperle opened his eyes and mouth wide. He was not to come any more! Why, pray tell? Then his comrade told him that all the goats and cattle in the village were to be transferred to another high mountain pasture, and he would have to go up there every day to get the milk.

"I'll go with you," exclaimed Kasperle, for it seemed to him it would be fine to live up on the mountain meadow.

But Michel shook his head sadly. "That wouldn't do," he said seriously. "You must wander farther on; they would find you here. In fact a guardsman has already been at our house inquiring for you."

Kasperle hung his head in despair. There was no longer any fun in wandering about without a home. How he wished he were back in the forest cottage again! But where was it? He didn't know the way back, for he had fled in so many crisscross directions. Michel didn't know, either. But he gave Kasperle some sensible advice. The last day before he left, he promised to bring Kasperle a large loaf of bread in exchange for the pennies which the teacher's wife had given him. Then Kasperle was to wander along the crests of the mountains, avoiding the villages for a few days, until he should finally come to the principality of S——. There, Michel thought, the Duke would not be allowed

to capture him. "When you get to a blue and yellow boundary post, you will be at the border."

Kasperle promised to observe all these directions and to be very sensible from now on. And he did as Michel advised, crept into the cave while his friend wandered homeward with his goats; and there he slept much better than he had in the little ghost chamber.



CHAPTER XIII

The Gay-colored Garden

The little sack of money which Kasperle had hurled against the door with all his might landed right in the Duke's lap. Kerplump, there it lay and there lay the Duke's chocolate spilled over everything. The Duke began to scream as if he had learned how to from Kasperle. "The ghost, the ghost!" he bellowed; and all who heard his screams came hurrying by. They all stared into the narrow room, but no one quite ventured to enter it. Perhaps the wicked ghost was still sitting in the corner somewhere. Finally several chamberlains arrived upon the scene, and Rosemary's father also. They examined the little room carefully, took note of the treasure chest and the stairs, and descended into the dark passage. In the corridor the kitchen maids were huddling close together and wailing: "The ghost will kill us all!"

The poor Duke lay all curled up in bed; the doctor gave him some stomach drops and said it would help if he took some more camomile tea. But before he drank the tea, the chamberlains had returned; one held the tip of a link of sausage in his hand and

said: "The ghost must have lost this. But, since ghosts don't eat sausage, it must have been a live person."

"It was Kasperle all right," cried the Duke. "I think now that I caught a glimpse of him when the door flew open."

The Count thought, too, it might well have been Kasperle, for a robber would not have played catch with a bag of money. He would have taken it with him.

"The whole region must be searched," commanded the Duke; "the little hobgoblin must be around somewhere!"

When Michel drove his goats home that evening, he passed close to the castle. He met a kitchen maid, whom he questioned about this, that, and the other thing; and she hastily told him everything that had happened. Michel's heart was heavy, and he worried so about Kasperle all night long that he could hardly sleep. On the following morning he started out at such an early hour with his goats that all the peasant women began to scold him. "It's still night time," they said. When Michel passed the castle it looked as if everyone there were still asleep, but a guard was standing at the place where the secret passage was. He wore an ugly expression and called out to Michel: "Hey there, boy, take good care of your goats to-day, for after awhile the hunters and dogs are going to search the forest."

Oh ho, now Michel started to run; the poor goats could hardly keep up with him; but Michel kept urging them on till the guard had to laugh behind his back. If he had only dreamed to whom Michel was hurrying! He found Kasperle sitting in the cave and

in great excitement told him about the new danger. "Stay in there," he said, "and I will hastily plant a bush in front of the opening, so no one can see you."

And Michel did as he said he would. He dug up a bush, planted it before the little cave, and did it so skillfully that the entrance was actually hidden from view. Kasperle sat on the inside; Michel outside; and thus they could talk with each other.

The noon hour came; the woods remained perfectly quiet, and Kasperle had just remarked that he would like to come out for a little while when loud shouts and barking of dogs resounded in the distance. Then the hearts of the two comrades beat hard, for the sounds kept coming nearer and nearer. Suddenly surly Matthias and two other guardsmen stepped out of the forest. When the forester beheld Michel tending his goats so quietly, he merely called up to him: "Did you see anyone pass by here?"

"No, no one!" Michel shouted back, as he thought to himself with secret laughter: I am telling the truth; sitting inside isn't passing by!

The huntsmen went on; but one of the dogs came running, for he smelled Kasperle's traces on the ground. Michel began to shout fearfully: "My goats, my goats!" Then Matthias called the dog off; and Kasperle remained sitting in his cave unharmed.

After that their peace was not disturbed again; and Michel went home while Kasperle remained behind, very lonely. He

longed for the Duke's silken bed. That was a much softer place to sleep in!

Again another bright, pleasant day dawned. It was a day for leave taking, for it was the last day the goats were to be driven out. Michel came to bring the bread, and the two friends were very sad as they whiled away the time together. When Michel had to leave, Kasperle began to weep bitterly.

His friend tried to comfort him, but Kasperle cried in torrents, till finally Michel began to cry too. He felt very sorry for lonely, deserted Kasperle, and would have preferred to run out into the wide world with him. Finally, however, they had to take leave of one another. Kasperle remained behind all alone in his rocky retreat; and Michel drove his goats home, feeling very sad indeed. He hung his head sorrowfully, and thus he nearly ran down several trees and the castle, too; at least he bumped his nose on the castle, and a guard roundly abused him for it. Moreover he exclaimed: "Here's a strange boy prowling around here!" It was fortunate, indeed, that surly Matthias was acquainted with the little goatherd, for he allowed him to go on and didn't question him further in regard to Kasperle.

The time passed drearily for Kasperle in his cave. He didn't care to sleep; and when the moon came up, quite round and full, he prepared to start out into the world once more. He buckled on the knapsack which Michel had sacrificed for him and which contained the bread. Then, taking the staff that his friend had cut for him, he wandered out into the still night.

The moon shed bright silver streams of light on Kasperle's path. He was terribly lonely, and only once did the little rascal see a village in the distance. But he followed Michel's good advice and made a wide circuit around it. When day dawned he sought a hidden place in the deep recesses of the forest, where he lay and slept until evening approached; then he got up and wandered on.

For five long nights Kasperle wandered on in this lonely fashion; he had eaten all of his bread except a tiny crust. Finally, early one morning, he noticed a boundary post, and in the plain down below, there lay a rather large city. He slept only a few hours on this day. At noon he ate his last bit of bread and then began to descend into the valley. But the city was farther away than he thought, and the sun had already donned its bright red evening dress when he came to one of the city gates. Around the city there ran an ancient city wall. It had gates and towers; and, from the little tower windows, pink petunias hung down in gay profusion, and geraniums bloomed alongside of them.

But Kasperle didn't note how beautiful all this was, for he caught sight of something much more beautiful. Just without the city wall lay a large garden, in which a thousand varieties of gay summer flowers were blooming. Pretty hollyhocks bordered the paths, while beds of marigold shimmered in golden splendor. Larkspur, helmet flowers, fennel, and Job's-tears were all blooming close together, side by side, while yellow roses and red car-

nations hung down from the city wall. As Kasperle gazed at this gay-colored splendor, he felt that the ballroom in the Duke's castle was not nearly so pretty as this garden. An old white-bearded gentleman went around among the beds, carefully sprinkling plant after plant. He bent over, picked up the sprinkling can, emptied it, and then refilled it at a little well. He looked, however, as if this were very heavy work for him. And just as he was about to fill his can again, Kasperle suddenly stood beside him. He seized the can and—slap, dash—he began to sprinkle with a flourish. At the same time his face lighted up with laughter, and the old gardener had to laugh, too. He was very much pleased with the little helper who had climbed over the fence from nowhere. He seated himself on a bench, and Kasperle kept on watering the garden; it seemed to him as though he had never had more enjoyable work. He was very happy in this gay-colored garden, in the midst of which stood a little house, almost completely covered with vines. And when Kasperle had finished, he sat down on the bench beside the old gardener; and, with a twinkle in his eyes, he asked wistfully: "May I stay with you?"

The old man laughed. "You are indeed a comical little chap!" he said. "Who are you, pray tell? Where did you come from? What is your name?"

Kasperle sighed a deep sigh. The old man affected him just as Michel had: he was ashamed to tell him a pack of lies. He hung his head sorrowfully, and the old gardener asked him in



FRANK DOBIAS

Kasperle suddenly stood beside him.

all earnestness, but in a kindly tone: "Haven't you run away, little fellow?"

Kasperle sighed again, but he didn't dare tell who he was; he had acquired too great a fear of people. Then the old gentleman took him by the hand, led him into the house and said in a friendly tone: "Stay with me in my garden! To-morrow, perhaps, you will tell me who you are."

And Kasperle did stay. While they ate supper together the old gardener told all about his flowers, how they grew, and blossomed; and Kasperle didn't tire of listening. Meantime, the sun had gone down, and the old man told Kasperle he had better go to sleep; and he showed him a little room in which there stood a bed. It seemed delightfully soft after the many nights he had slept on the ground in the forest. The fragrance of many, many flowers streamed into his room through the open window, and as he lay there he suddenly began to hear faint notes and melodious sounds; it was wonderful music, and he grew wide awake over it. He had never in his life heard anything lovelier than this soft, sweet music. It affected him quite strangely; it made him cry. Great big teardrops streamed down his cheeks; and as he thought of his loneliness, he was seized with a great longing to be back in the forest cottage again. The tones kept growing sweeter and lovelier, and finally Kasperle fell asleep in the midst of them.

He slept peacefully till bright daylight, until the old gardener awakened him. "Come," he said, "let's go into the garden and

water the flowers, so they won't get thirsty. It's going to be hot to-day."

Kasperle sprang out contented, and contentedly he watered the flowers. Many needed a great deal of water, many were only slightly thirsty. The old gardener explained it all to him and named the flowers for him as well. Then Kasperle was set to work picking the ripe berries that were hanging on the bushes. He was allowed to eat some, but had to put the others in tiny baskets that were very prettily lined with leaves. The old man himself picked pears from a tree.

While they were still busy at work, several women and children called. They bought fruit and flowers, and ordered lettuce and all sorts of vegetables for the kitchen. "Oh, you've hired an apprentice, I see!" said one of the women, who noticed Kasperle. But the children stood staring at the little garden boy in wonder; and he, not being at all pleased with this staring, made his robber face as quick as a flash.

At first the children screamed and ran away a short distance, but they soon came back and begged: "Please do it again!"

Kasperle had to laugh, and then he began to make the funniest faces imaginable. The children laughed boisterously, and the old gardener and the woman looked on in astonishment. "My, but you've a neat little apprentice, Mr. Helmer!" said the women; "where did you get him?"

The old gardener remained silent. Kasperle struck him as being very odd, indeed; and when the women and children were

gone, he said to his little guest: "What kind of a little rascal are you, anyway? Tell me, where did you learn to make such faces?"

Then Kasperle regarded him confidentially, and told him who he was. Thereupon the gardener became furious. "Shame on you," he cried, "to tell an old man such lies! You pretend to be a Kasperle? Never in my life have I ever heard that a Kasperle was anything but a wooden doll! Fie upon you, it's terrible to lie like that!"

Kasperle stood there completely baffled. He hadn't the slightest idea how he could explain to the enraged gardener that he was really a Kasperle.

Just at that moment the garden gate opened, and a fine young man entered. He looked at the old gentleman in astonishment as he said: "What is the matter, Mr. Helmer? I have never heard you scold so before?"

"Oh, it is you, Mr. Severin!" replied the gardener. "Well, just listen to the lies which this rascal, whom I took in yesterday, out of sheer pity, is trying to impose upon me!" Then he told, angrily, what Kasperle had just said, while Mr. Severin stood there regarding Kasperle intently with his keen dark eyes. Then he shook his head gently. "He didn't tell a lie, Mr. Helmer," he said. "He is really a genuine, live Kasperle. There are only a few Kasperles in the world; and my teacher, who was a very learned man, told me once that somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean there is a tiny island upon which the most gorgeous flowers grow; this is the home of the Kasperles. If they remain there, they be-

come very old; there, they live and die just as people do. If a Kasperle leaves the island he is able to sleep for years and years, but he never dies; he always remains a silly little Kasperle, and every child has to laugh at him."

When Kasperle heard this story, he suddenly began to feel very ill at ease. He began to weep bitterly. Where his home was, he had forgotten; in fact he didn't remember anything. He had forgotten everything in his sleep. But like a dream, the memory of a blooming garden flashed across his mind. Then the strange, fine-looking gentleman said to him compassionately: "You poor little, lost Kasperle, you!" This sounded almost as nice as the music yesterday, and had a wonderfully soothing effect upon Kasperle. And he became very light-hearted and happy again, as the stranger patted him gently.

Mr. Helmer, however, kept shaking his head, for the history of the Kasperles seemed so strange to him. Then he urged his little guest to recount all his adventures once more; and, as Kasperle related, his listeners laughed and felt sorry by turns. Finally, Mr. Severin said: "I am going away on a journey in a short time, and then I shall try to find the forest cottage; for, after all, that is your home, little Kasperle."

"And until then, you may stay with me," said Mr. Helmer. "I'll take care that nothing happens to you."

Now Kasperle was as happy as before, and when Mr. Helmer said: "Go pick a bouquet for Mr. Severin," Kasperle ran hurriedly about in the garden here and there until he had picked

a hit-or-miss bouquet of many colors. It looked very comical; and when the gardener and Mr. Severin saw it, they had to laugh. Mr. Severin said it was by far the jolliest bouquet he had ever had. He lived quite close to the pretty garden in one of the old city-wall towers. Mr. Helmer told Kasperle that Mr. Severin was indeed quite an artist, a very great musician. Whenever he played an instrument, he gave it a soul. And from far and wide, from far-off lands, he was often sent for, to come and give an organ, perhaps, a soul.

Kasperle didn't quite understand what this meant but he knew now that it was Mr. Severin who had played so beautifully yesterday evening. And he already began to rejoice at the thought of hearing the lovely music again. Indeed, that very evening, the soft tones were again wafted across the blooming garden. The flowers were very fragrant. Kasperle sat down beside the old gardener in front of the house for a long time, and all fear that someone might harm him had completely vanished.

The following morning Mr. Helmer said: "Kasperle, to-day is Saturday, many people will come to buy bouquets for Sunday. Go tie some together. Make them as gay and funny as you did the one for Mr. Severin yesterday."

What joy for Kasperle! He hurriedly began to cut the flowers, and he tied them together in gaudy array. Mr. Helmer had to laugh when he saw bouquet after bouquet lying in the well trough. The people who came to buy flowers for Sunday were affected just as the gardener was. They had to laugh. Even a

peevish old lady burst into laughter when Mr. Helmer handed her a bouquet. "I never saw such a bouquet," she exclaimed. "It simply makes you laugh whether you want to or not!"

More and more people kept coming; all wanted gay Kasperle bouquets, and all laughed at the comical garden boy who hopped around in the garden like a rabbit. He bound bouquet after bouquet together till finally the gardener said that he had picked enough, and that there wouldn't be any flowers left over. Then, to his great astonishment, he noticed that Kasperle had picked them so skillfully that hardly any seemed missing. Then he praised his little helper and in the evening, when Mr. Severin came, he told him what a good boy Kasperle had been.

And Kasperle was good, but at the same time he was a good-for-nothing little rascal too! A Kasperle just has to cut up capers; and children just have to laugh whenever they see a Kasperle. It's simply in the nature of things. It wasn't long before the children in the neighborhood discovered what a little rogue Kasperle was. They told other children, and in a few days there was a continuous procession to and from Mr. Helmer's garden. The children stood outside the fence and waited, and whenever Kasperle came into the garden a peal of laughter burst forth. Kasperle would make his robber face or imitate gloomy Gus or the devil, until Mr. Helmer would have to laugh too. But once, when he saw Kasperle making these faces he cautioned him: "If you aren't careful, you'll give yourself away!"

Indeed, on the very next day, Kasperle had a terrific scare.

Some boys called to him: "Aren't you going to the fair with us, day after to-morrow? There's a Kasperle man there, but he's not nearly so clever as you are!"

Kasperle in his fright forgot all about making faces. What if it should turn out to be the Kasperle man who had been hunting everywhere for him! He confided his worst fears to Mr. Helmer with such pathos in his voice that Mr. Helmer promised he would go and see.

The following day there was much work to be done; and, strange to relate, no children called. Kasperle worked industriously, skipping and hopping about in the garden, and from the garden into the house. Once, just after he had entered the house, Mr. Severin came hurrying into the garden, carrying a large black box over his shoulder. He called quietly to Mr. Helmer to follow him quickly. No sooner inside in the entry than he seized Kasperle with a firm grasp and dragged him into the living room. There, he set his box down on the floor, and opening it, he cried: "Hurry, hurry Kasperle, get in there!"

Kasperle obeyed, and clap! the cover shut down on top of him. Mr. Severin seated himself on the box and began playing softly and gently on his violin. But he didn't get very far before a troop of children, shouting frantically and followed by the Kasperle man and several guards, came running into the house. "Where is Kasperle, where is Kasperle?" they demanded in loud tones. "We are going to catch Kasperle. The Duke wants Kasperle. Where is he, where is he?"



"Where is Kasperle?"

Several boys, however, whispered to Mr. Helmer on the sly: "We'll help him to escape."

Mr. Helmer looked about, baffled. "Kasperle was just here," he muttered; and Mr. Severin nodded and said, too: "Why he was just here." Then he kept on playing quietly as he went on to say: "I am going away to-morrow, Mr. Helmer; my trunk is all packed and I shall take the first stagecoach early in the morning."

"It's all the same to us, whether you go or not," shouted the Kasperle man roughly. "We're out to find Kasperle; he must be here!"

"Let's search the house," cried the guards gruffly, at the same time eying Mr. Severin severely. He nodded assent: "All right, go ahead! But don't forget the garden, whatever you do!"

"The last I saw of him, he was in the garden," said Mr. Helmer, who really meant to tell the truth, though at the same time he couldn't help wishing to himself that Kasperle had managed to escape. Then the Kasperle man, guards, and children all rushed into the garden. As for Mr. Severin, he took his box on his back and his fiddle under his arm; and, after inviting Mr. Helmer to call on him in the evening, he left the house. Singing softly to himself, he strode through the garden and no one detained him.

They all hunted and searched; the Kasperle man himself climbed up on the city wall, to see whether Kasperle could pos-

sibly have escaped there. Then the Kasperle man, guards, and children all ran back into the house. Not a corner was left unsearched. They even looked into the salt box and the coffeepot. But Kasperle was nowhere to be found. The Kasperle man shouted and yelled: "He has escaped, all because we ran back into the house. Oh, how stupid, stupid, stupid!"

"Don't worry, we'll catch him soon!" cried the guards, "Heigh ho, heigh ho, we'll catch a Kasperle soon!"

And then they proceeded to question good Mr. Helmer. And he told them how Kasperle had come to him and what he had said and done.

Meanwhile, the Kasperle man kept exclaiming: "Escaped, escaped, stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid!" While the guards kept shouting: "Heigh ho, heigh ho, we'll catch him yet!" But a few boys suddenly roared out loud: "Escaped, hooray, escaped, hooray!" And then they all ran out on to the street, filling it with their noisy yells. They told everyone who would listen to them how the Kasperle man, in setting up his stage in preparation for the fair on the following day, had held up a doll that looked exactly like the little gardener boy; how he had asked: "Have you seen a lively little Kasper like this anywhere?" and how they all exclaimed: "Yes, Mr. Helmer's apprentice looks exactly like that!" Yes, this was how it all came about. Then they marched down the street, shouting: "Escaped, hooray, fine, fine, fine, escaped!"

The Kasperle man however grew yellow with rage. The more the boys yelled the more angry he became. "I might have been a Count by morning," he exclaimed, "if this confounded numskull of a Kasperle hadn't escaped. Stupid, stupid, stupid!"



CHAPTER XIV

The Journey with Mr. Severin

Meantime, Mr. Severin had quietly carried the black box up to his tower room, and there he allowed Kasperle to get out. The little rogue looked around bewildered, but Mr. Severin only laughed a little as he said: "Kasperle, you stupid little rascal, this is the time you came pretty nearly getting caught!"

Pretty nearly, but not quite! Kasperle's heart beat loudly at the mere thought of the hubbub that had surrounded him.

In an hour Mr. Helmer arrived. He was very much pleased, indeed, to see Kasperle again unharmed, and he would gladly have taken him back, but he agreed with Mr. Severin when he said: "Kasperle must leave. He cannot stay here any longer. Tomorrow I shall start out on my journey, and I shall take Kasperle along with me in the black box. And now, Kasperle, prick up your ears: "You're going back to the forest cottage. I know now where it is located, but——"

Kasperle was just going to turn a sommersault for joy, when this "but" restrained him. He looked at Mr. Severin somewhat anxiously as he now said: "Yes, Kasperle, but you must be mighty sensible, for we shall come to many places where you are known. In Waldrast, I have to look after the spinet at Deerlodge; the Duke is expecting me. You will have to stay in the black box at these places, and you won't dare cut up any capers. Can you promise me you won't?"

Kasperle sighed a deep sigh, but he promised faithfully he would be ever so good. At the same time his eyes began to twinkle merrily, for the idea of returning to the Duke's castle and to Waldrast, without being seen, struck him as being very funny indeed. Of course he would have loved to see Rosemary and little Michel again. This evening, as he sat talking to Mr. Severin, he told him all about these two little friends of his, to which Mr. Severin replied: "Who knows, perhaps we shall see them

yet. On a journey it's very curious the way one often meets with people."

The following morning the sun had scarcely risen before Kasperle had to crawl into the black box. It was a little crowded, for Mr. Severin had to pack his tools in there too; and when he picked it up it seemed as though Kasperle was pretty heavy. But off they started. Mr. Helmer was standing in his gay-colored garden; and, since there wasn't a soul to be seen anywhere around, Kasperle was allowed to run hurriedly in and out among the beds, once more. How beautiful the garden was! Kasperle's heart was heavy at the thought of parting with Mr. Helmer and his many pretty flowers. But Mr. Severin urged him to hurry for it was about time for the coach. And no sooner had Kasperle crept back into the black box than—tra-ra, tra-ra—the yellow coach came rumbling along. The black box was loaded on top, and Mr. Severin got inside. "Gee up!" and away they went.

"Dear village, good-by; In parting we sigh," the horn seemed to say as the postilion blew it finally; and—rattledy, joggledy—the coach started off through the country.

At noon they arrived at an inn, where the coach halted. The guests dismounted, and Mr. Severin asked for a room where he could eat alone, as he was accustomed to. Great scott, thought the landlord, this must be a distinguished man! So he had Mr. Severin's meals carried up to a private room. Then Kasperle emerged from his box and joined the feast. Afterwards the inn keeper marveled at his distinguished guest's enormous appetite.

The journey went on and on and on. Finally they came to an inn, At the Sign of the Red Ox. Then Mr. Severin got out and bade the postilion good-by. That good fellow said to himself Mr. Severin would have to hustle, for Waldrast lay high up in the mountains and the black box was mighty heavy.

"It won't be so bad," thought Mr. Severin as he strode past the Red Ox Inn along a narrow path leading toward the woods. Once within the forest, he allowed Kasperle to get out and walk beside him. They both listened very intently for footsteps, but not a soul did they meet on the way. Mr. Severin played his fiddle, Kasperle kept in perfect step, and in a few hours he got back into the black box, for the church tower of Waldrast loomed into sight.

And thus Kasperle entered Waldrast. Nobody saw him, but he saw many things through his peek hole; first of all Aunt Mummeline, who was standing out on the street scolding some boys. Next he saw the beloved schoolhouse, and then Mr. Habermus coming to greet the strange artist. When Kasperle heard the schoolmaster's kindly, gentle voice his box seemed oppressively narrow. It was a very hard ordeal, indeed, not to be able to say good-day to anyone; and somewhat later, at the inn, when Mr. Severin re-opened the box, he found Kasperle soaking wet with tears.

Mr. Severin comforted him gently and showed him that they were staying right next to the schoolhouse. From the window Kasperle could see people in the room next door; and just as he

was about to look, Aunt Mummeline came to the window. Oh ho, Kasperle jumped back in a jiffy! Then he began to look very cross, and Mr. Severin raised his finger in warning: "Kasperle, Kasperle, don't do anything foolish!"

And that was the last of his intentions. If it had only been anyone else but Aunt Mummeline! But every time he went to the window, she appeared. Kasperle didn't get a chance to see Mrs. Habermus or the children, and he longed to see them so much.

Indeed, once when he was about to take another peek around the corner, the door opposite opened; and tramp, tramp, Aunt Mummeline came traipsing over to the inn. The inn keeper's wife was an intimate friend of hers, and Kasperle knew only too well that she was as curious as Aunt Mummeline herself. He quickly scurried back into the box; and, sure enough, in a little while the two women came into the room. Aunt Mummeline looked around inquisitively and Kasperle heard her say: "He keeps everything in his black box."

"We'll open it," whispered the inn keeper's wife and they began to finger the lock. Now Kasperle was well aware that they would have some difficulty in getting it open, but just the same he felt very uneasy. He thought to himself: "I'll chase them." Sticking his head into his little knapsack, he began to blow and bellow, producing such a frightful sound that both women nearly toppled over in fright. "Uhuhuuh!" it sounded. And Aunt Mummeline wailed: "He's got the devil in there!"

But the inn keeper's wife was more courageous. "I'll find out," she said and started toward the box again; but she had only gone part way when the door opened hastily, and Mr. Severin entered the room. He had heard the "uhuhuuh" downstairs.

Both meddlesome Matties were badly startled, but Aunt Mummeline quickly regained her composure and exclaimed very sternly: "You have a devil in your box."

"Oh, only one who has it in for curious folk!" laughed Mr. Severin. "Beware, sometimes he pops out with a terrific bang."

"Oooh!" screamed the women; and lickity split out they rushed and down the stairs, while Kasperle in his box nearly burst with laughter. Mr. Severin had to laugh too, but nevertheless he said it was a good thing that they were leaving in the morning, for Kasperle must not frighten any more people; he might get into serious trouble. So in the evening, Mr. Severin cautiously locked the room. He went over to the schoolmaster's house to pay a final visit, and thought it safest to lock Kasperle in. But most monotonous, too, thought Kasperle. He kept glancing stealthily out of the window; and, when everything was quiet out of doors, he jumped up on the window sill and sat looking over toward the schoolhouse longingly. Oh, if he could only have gotten a glimpse of the interior once more! Right in front of the window stood a large crab-apple tree. If he should climb down the tree, then—. But he remembered Mr. Severin's warning; and besides a dog was lying down below, and the whole idea seemed a trifle too risky. But this much he might do, per-

haps—throw a few green crab apples right into Aunt Mummeline's room. Zip! right through the open window. That would be lots of fun!

A thing of that kind always made Aunt Mummeline as mad as a hornet. Kasperle chuckled quietly to himself as he reached for the branches and picked a few apples. He was good at throwing; and so—one, two, three—they flew right into Aunt Mummeline's room. Kasperle couldn't see what they hit, but he heard some terrible screaming; something crashed, and he slid down from the window sill in fright. He had stirred up a pretty mess.

The commotion lasted quite a while before it quieted down. Now Aunt Mummeline was standing in the cubbyhole behind the stove, crying, while they all stood around trying to comfort her. Even Mr. Severin, who kept thinking to himself: Kasperle, you're a little rascal, you are! Soon Aunt Mummeline started toward her own room, carrying a pitcher of water, but she had gotten only as far as the door when—one, two, three—crash! the pitcher broke into smithereens; bang! a large apple hit her right on the nose; crash! another struck the mirror. Then there was some screaming and yelling! Aunt Mummeline looked at Mr. Severin out of the corner of her eyes, as she said: "Perhaps the gentleman knows where these apples are coming from; there's certainly something very mysterious about that black box of his."

Mr. Severin pretended to be very angry and told her that, if she would come over, he'd show her the contents of the black box; but she wanted nothing to do with it, and ran hastily to

her chamber and got into bed quickly. She slid way down underneath the covers, but no more crab apples came flying into her room.

Now Mr. Severin took his fiddle and began to play. It sounded so sweet and delicate that people in Waldrast forgot all about going to bed. As they listened to the beautiful music, they wished that the violinist might stay in their village a long, long time. But on the following morning, the first rays of the sun had scarcely begun to glitter on the mountain tops before Mr. Severin was on his way again with his black box.

"He is a bad one," said Aunt Mummeline, after he had gone. "That black box of his ought to be examined." But no one took any stock in what she said, least of all the schoolmaster and his wife. Indeed, good Mr. Habermus didn't think the green-apple episode so strange or dreadful. "Boys in Waldrast," he said, "would be capable of that and much more. Who knows who it could have been!"

No one thought of Kasperle. Meantime he was trudging contentedly with Mr. Severin along the same path that he had traveled in such anxiety a few weeks before. The forest was perfectly quiet, and not a soul did they meet. Moreover at night they slept in the forest. Finally they came to the place where Michel used to graze his sheep. "Michel isn't here any more," said Kasperle, sadly. But Michel was there. He was sitting in front of the cave, playing upon a flute which he had made himself. Kasperle let out a shout, and Michel looked around as if he were

awaking from a dream. Then, more frantic even than his goats, he began leaping over bowlders and roots in his hurry to meet Kasperle. Then, seizing him by the hands, he turned him around and around. He was out of breath with joy, and at first he couldn't say a word. Kasperle, of course, had to tell all about his adventures; and Mr. Severin kept adding a word now and then, so that Michel soon learned everything. It didn't take him long to tell his story, however. All he said was: "The goats like it better here, so I came here to-day, for a change."

"What a lucky coincidence," said Mr. Severin as he began softly tuning his violin. He had been quick to observe Michel's longing expression. "Here, play something for me!" he said, suddenly handing the violin over to the boy.

Michel shrank back timidly. Jacob, the tailor who played at the village dances, had often allowed him to play on his violin. But Mr. Severin's instrument was quite a different-looking affair. He scarcely dared touch it. But once he had it in his hands, he was seized with a desire to play and he began to bow the strings gently.

Kasperle opened his eyes wide in admiration. Mr. Severin, however, listened quietly and thoughtfully; and once when Michel stopped, embarrassed, he said: "In the autumn, when I return I shall come and take you with me. I shall give your mother as much annual allowance as you earn by being goatherd. Then you shall learn from me what a good fiddler needs to know. Would you like to?"

Would Michel like to! He and Kasperle jumped around so for joy that it nearly made the goats envious not to be able to jump so high. And when Mr. Severin and Kasperle proceeded on their journey, Michel remained behind as happy as if he were sitting in a meadow in heaven. At last he was to become a violinist and be able to play what the trees whispered and the brooklets murmured to him. For this, he reflected, I can thank Kasperle, Kasperle alone! He never suspected that Mr. Severin had thought to himself, when he heard Kasperle tell of his different adventures: The boy who is as poor as that, yet refuses a bag of money which no one knows anything about, that boy is the type of boy I like. If he can fiddle, I will help him to become a real artist.

Kasperle was exuberant over his comrade's good fortune. He wanted to sing for joy, but Mr. Severin hurriedly said: "Be quiet, be quiet or the trees will complain of the noise. Hurry, jump into the black box instead, for we may meet a guard, who will recognize you."

Kasperle hurriedly slipped into the box, and Mr. Severin carried it on his back. You may be sure he was mighty glad when the castle loomed up before him. To carry a genuine, live Kasperle like that was no easy task!

At the castle, the strange artist was cordially received. But everyone was curious in regard to the large black box he brought with him. "There's a very odd plaything in there," he said, "which I have to take with me everywhere I go." And he locked

his room up carefully, while Kasperle slid way down in bed, so that no one should see him. It was very tedious, for he would have loved to prow! around in the castle or have watched to see how Mr. Severin gave the Duke's spinet a soul.

Mr. Severin was sitting in the music room all alone, according to his wish, when the door opened softly and a little girl entered. She came very, very quietly on her tiptoes and listened very thoughtfully while the artist played. Mr. Severin glanced up at her and it flashed over him: Why, she looks just like Rosemary whom Kasperle talked about so much; Then he played the spinet as he sang half loudly:

*"Rosemary, my little one,
Rosemary, my pretty one,
Greetings kind, I'm bringing you
From a friend both dear and true.
Trallallala, trallallale!
Though he's a rascal, I confess
That you his name will surely guess."*

"Kasperle is his name!" she answered softly. Then Rosemary came and stood beside the spinet and looked up at Mr. Severin inquisitively with her large brown eyes. "Where is Kasperle?"

"So you are really Rosemary, are you?" said Mr. Severin. "Kasperle is returning to the forest cottage; he is going back home again."

Rosemary smiled her sweetest smile and touched the keys gently with her little finger tips; it sounded as though she played:

"Greetings, greetings, many greetings!"

"I'll deliver them; and if you can promise to keep a secret, you may see Kasperle once more."

Rosemary looked at Mr. Severin earnestly; then placing her little fingers over her red lips, she scampered out of the room quickly, for someone was approaching. Footsteps resounded in the adjoining room.

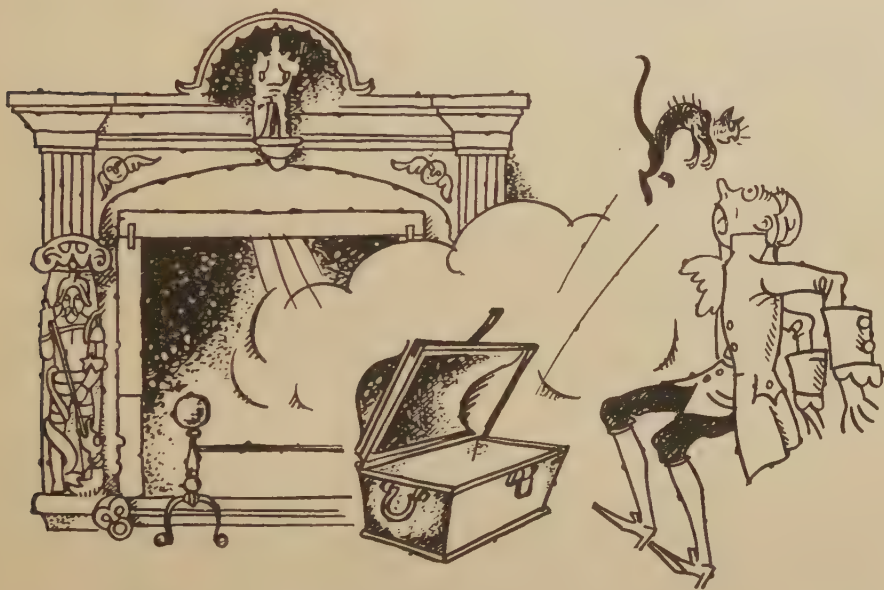
It was the Duke. He came to see whether the spinet had been given a soul as yet, and then he wanted to know what kind of strange plaything the artist had in his black box. In fact, the Duke was a rather inquisitive person; and it made him angry when Mr. Severin replied he could not show it, as it didn't belong to him and he had promised not to show it to anyone.

I will see it, just the same! thought the Duke, and he went away muttering. Mr. Severin became frightened. When a Duke wants a thing, it's a serious matter. Who knew? He might command his guards: "Open the box for me!" Sorrowfully, Mr. Severin began to walk through the many corridors, past many closed doors, toward his room. Suddenly a little black cat crossed his path. Upon my word, he thought, this just comes in handy! And he caught the kitten up quickly and took it with him.

He found Kasperle sitting in his room, as morose and sullen as a person whose Easter joy has been spoiled by the rain. But his face brightened up when Mr. Severin told him about Rose-

mary: "I suppose the Duke invited her and her parents to visit him," said Kasperle.

"Yes, my Kasperle, and you might have been invited, too, if you hadn't been such a little scamp when you were here before. Now you'll have to crawl into the fireplace and climb up high



like a chimney sweep." Then Mr. Severin told Kasperle about the Duke's request.

Now Kasperle *was* frightened, for he feared the Duke more than anyone else. He crept hastily into the fireplace, and it worked fine. Mr. Severin put the little black kitten into the box; and scarcely had he finished, before a chamberlain appeared and said he would like to show the castle to the strange violinist, as it

was the Duke's command. Meantime, he wants to peek into the black box, thought Mr. Severin, laughing quietly to himself.

And he was right. Hardly had they left the room before Kasperle heard footsteps and voices. Then he heard the Duke's command: "Open the box!"

Jiminy, thought Kasperle, what a shame a chimney has no peek holes! He wanted to try to see something, and he had just climbed as far as the stovepipe hole when the box opened and the black cat jumped out, spitting and mewing. Zip! it landed on the Duke's shoulder; and before anyone could catch it, it jumped out of the open window.

"Kerchoo!" Kasperle had gotten some soot in his nose and he had to sneeze out loud. "Kerchoo, kerchoo!" and puff! a thick cloud of soot gushed out of the chimney. Puffing and spitting and sneezing, the Duke rushed out of the room, and the servants followed. They all thought that the black cloud had issued from the box and the Duke began to scold vehemently, and accused the artist of being a sorcerer. At the same time he was also a little ashamed of himself, too.

Mr. Severin laughed heartily when he returned to the room and saw the mess things were in. Kasperle looked like a little chimney sweep and he wasn't at all in love with himself. But Mr. Severin helped him to wash up and get perfectly clean again. Then Kasperle crept back into his box, contented; and Mr. Severin went to the Duke and told him that he would have to leave, as his wonderful plaything had pretty nearly gone to pieces. The

Duke sighed a deep sigh and begged Mr. Severin, fervently, to play for him that evening.

The violinist promised he would, but he asked that no children be present. "Oh," exclaimed the Duke, "there are no children in the castle! Only little Countess Rosemary is here, and she wouldn't disturb you."

"Indeed she would disturb me, she must go to bed," explained Mr. Severin, pretending to be much in earnest.

So Rosemary was not allowed to come into the music room that evening to hear the strange artist play. But all the servants stood behind the doors and listened. And Mr. Severin played so wonderfully that the Duke began to cry.

Meantime Kasperle was sitting with Rosemary, blissfully happy, in a tiny room adjoining Mr. Severin's. It was seldom used and was more of a storeroom than anything else, but they both thought it was very nice. Good Mr. Severin had told Rosemary where she would find Kasperle. And now Kasperle began to tell all about his adventures, feasting all the while on the cake and chocolate which Rosemary had brought to him. Rosemary was no longer afraid of a Kasperle; and when he told her how he had been compelled to flee, again and again, she shed bitter tears. "Poor, poor Kasperle!" she said tenderly, "how fine it is that you are going back to the forest cottage!" But once she shook her finger at him and scolded, saying: "You little rascal, you!" She fell in love with everyone who had helped Kasperle, the schoolmaster's family, Mr. Helmer, and above all, Michel. She wanted,

especially, to see Michel. "He must be my friend, too," she said, "and when he is grown up and can play as well as Mr. Severin, then—" "You will marry him," exclaimed Kasperle. Suddenly great big tear drops started to roll down his cheeks. "And I shall always be nothing but a Kasperle!" he wailed.

But Rosemary comforted him by saying that by that time he would probably have found his island home. "When I am grown up I shall search for it," she promised, "and so will Michel, and Mr. Severin, too, no doubt."

Now Kasperle was happy again. He stuffed the last piece of cake into his large mouth and hastily began to tell the crab-apple story. Rosemary laughed and laughed over it, till finally Mr. Severin returned and said: "Quickly to bed, my little one; it is very late, indeed!"

"Good-by till to-morrow!" whispered Rosemary as she vanished from the room. In the castle, no one had noticed that she hadn't gone to bed. And afterwards, she kept dreaming about Kasperle and Michel and the beautiful, gay-colored garden. But when she woke up, Mr. Severin had already departed with his black box. Kasperle was gone, and Rosemary never saw him again.

CHAPTER XV

Home Again in the Forest Cottage

Once more Mr. Severin started off through the woods with Kasperle. Down they went farther and farther into the valley till they came to a little mite of a village where they caught the yellow stagecoach. "Tra-ra, tra-ta, tra-ta!" the postilion blew his horn. Mr. Severin got in, the black box was loaded on top—and away they went. Kasperle looked out on the world through his little peek holes. Presently he saw the castle in which Rosemary had lived. Now they came to the road he had traveled with Count Singerlingen. And on they went, and on and on. The coach rumbled past a flock of sheep, tended by a tall shepherd. Good gracious, it was Damian! Finally a village loomed into sight; it was Protzendorf.

"This is as far as the stagecoach goes," shouted the postilion. "Yes, the residents of Protzendorf have become very haughty, the coach comes to their village now." Meanwhile the black box was unloaded, and Kasperle could see the Protzendorf children grouped about the coach. His one-time friends Windgus and Watergus soon came snooping around. And the village people without exception—especially the inn keeper—were very much

disappointed that the strange man did not care to stay. They were of the opinion that everyone ought to like their little hamlet, even if the pigs did run around in the streets. Mr. Severin thought otherwise. Better not, he said to himself; Kasperle isn't to be trusted, and it would be tragic to have him caught so near his goal. Therefore, he took his black case and wandered on, giving Kasperle no chance either to play a joke on Florian or to greet his former companions.

On the way from Protzendorf to the forest cottage there was a foot path that was seldom traveled. This Mr. Severin followed. Kasperle was allowed to get out of the box, and they both traveled on happily toward the forest cottage. All the way Kasperle frisked about like a squirrel, and Mr. Severin fiddled as they went along. It sounded like the chirping of birds, like the song of the nightingale.

Suddenly, as they were traveling along in this manner, a warm, gentle voice exclaimed: "Goodness me, if that isn't Kasperle!" And there among the green bushes, underneath an ancient pine tree, sat Liebetraut; a fawn was grazing beside her. Mr. Severin stood stock-still, but Kasperle ran up to Liebetraut with such outbursts of joy that the fawn fled in haste. "Oh, Kasperle, you dear, bad Kasperle," exclaimed Liebetraut. "Where did you come from?"

"Don't be angry!" begged Kasperle nestling up close to Liebetraut. The pretty maiden smiled; and stroking Kasperle's



Kasperle ran to Liebtraut with an outburst of joy.

frowzy head, she exclaimed joyously "I'm only glad you're back again, you scamp, you runaway, you little darling!"

Soon Kasperle was telling all about his experiences, and Liebetraut both laughed and cried. Then she told how the Kasperle man had been there twice and had inquired whether Kasperle had gotten back yet. But he couldn't molest him here, for the forest house was just over the border; and the Prince of this territory and the Duke didn't get on well together. Therefore, the Duke wouldn't dare capture him here; but in Protzendorf a guardsman was hired to be on the lookout all the time, and Florian and Damian said that if they ever got hold of Kasperle it would go hard with him.

"Come," begged Kasperle anxiously, "let's go home to the forest house!" So Liebetraut got up and they all started to march toward the forest cottage. "Now we are coming to the border," said Liebetraut. "Kasperle, hurry, slip into the box; I'm so afraid! Sometimes a guardsman stands at the border."

Kasperle crept into the box; and hardly had Mr. Severin clapped it shut again, before a guardsman did come out of the bushes. "Stop!" he cried. "I must examine everything to see whether someone may not be carrying a Kasperle over the border."

Mr. Severin began to play on his violin; it sounded beautiful. And he added: "I have just come from the Duke's hunting castle, but the Duke didn't make me a present of a Kasperle." At this

the guardsman had to laugh, and since he couldn't help thinking that such a fine man as that, who could play so wonderfully, wouldn't bother with a Kasperle, he allowed Mr. Severin and Liebetraut to pass on. "This pesky Kasperle!" he grumbled, "we've been hunting him for weeks; first he's here, then he's there. They'll never catch him."

"Yes, I've no doubt," said Mr. Severin jokingly, "he's a little rascal. Only take care that he doesn't escape under your very nose!"

"Me!" exclaimed the guard. "Ha, I'm a sly old fox. Kasperle will never elude me!"

Mr. Severin hastily began playing his violin again. This time it was a jolly little piece, intended to counteract the laughter that was issuing from the black box. Kasperle didn't mean to laugh, but he couldn't restrain himself. He kept giggling, and the guard shouted to Mr. Severin: "My, Mister, but you're a fine fiddler; you can almost make your fiddle laugh!"

"Just you watch out so that Kasperle doesn't escape you!" Mr. Severin called back and then Liebetraut, too, had to laugh.

Greatly amused, they strode on till suddenly the forest cottage loomed into view, just ahead of them. Now Mr. Severin let Kasperle out of the black box once more. He set up a loud shout for joy. Before him lay the forest cottage, surrounded by a garden of gay summer flowers. Its windows were all open and at one of the windows sat Master Friedolin, carving. Kasperle ran toward the house with loud shouts of joy, and Master Friedolin

dropped his carving tool in amazement. "Goodness, what in the world does this mean!"

Kasperle was home again. Kasperle!

Mother Annette came to greet him, holding the frying pan in her hand, so hurriedly had she left her work of preparing supper.

And Kasperle was obliged to tell his story and to eat in between times. Mr. Severin was urged to remain in the forest cottage as a guest. He was given the very best room in the upper story. The forest trees seemed to share in the general happiness and pointed their branches toward the windows of his room, and he played till far into the night and so beautifully that Liebetraut sat on her bed and wept for joy.

Kasperle, however, slept soundly, and without dreaming; and when he awoke the following morning, Liebetraut was standing at his bedside. She looked very beautiful as she smiled at him and said: "Kasperle, do you realize that you are home again—in the forest cottage again!"

Kasperle jumped out of bed with a bound. At home, in the forest cottage! Hurray! How glorious not to be pursued any more, not to have to be hiding all the time. What a relief!

Mr. Severin liked it in the forest cottage as well as Kasperle did. But, after a few weeks, he had to start out on his journeys again. He had to play before strange people, and he had to give instruments souls. But he intended to return again and take Liebetraut for his wife, and they were all going to live together in the

forest cottage. Even little Michel, for Mr. Severin said he had to keep his promise. Just think, Michel!

Kasperle frolicked joyfully around in the woods at the thought of Michel's coming. Then he wouldn't be lonely any more. Then he would have a dear, dear playmate.

"Do you ever think of running away?" Liebetraut would sometimes ask him. But he would shake his head vigorously: "No, no, no. I will always stay in the forest cottage!"

And he was always careful, when in the woods, never to cross the border, and after several weeks when the Kasperle man appeared again, Kasperle crept into bed and pulled the covers way up over his ears. However the Kasperle man noticed that Kasperle was home again, for he did considerable spying around. But Liebetraut had taken care to lock Kasperle's door and she carried the key in her pocket. So the Kasperle man had to leave; but Kasperle stayed on in the forest cottage. Nor did he allow himself to be enticed away, either, when a few days later a tradesman appeared and promised him all sorts of beautiful presents if he would only carry his satchel part way for him. Oh no! Kasperle had acquired a little wisdom out in the great world. He didn't intend to get caught so easily as that. Moreover, the Duke might be as angry as he pleased; he never caught Kasperle.

In the winter when Mr. Severin returned, a quiet, happy wedding took place in the forest cottage. And after several weeks, a guest arrived. It was dear Mr. Habermus, and he brought

Michel with him. It was a happy reunion; and after a few days, when Mr. Habermus started back home, he said: "Kasperle, you were a bad pupil, but I wouldn't mind having you in my school again. However, you are better off in the forest cottage."

And it was true. Nowhere did Kasperle find life so agreeable as in the forest cottage. Only on the Kasperle Island could it possibly have been better. But no one knew where that was, for no one knows the real home of the Kasperles.

